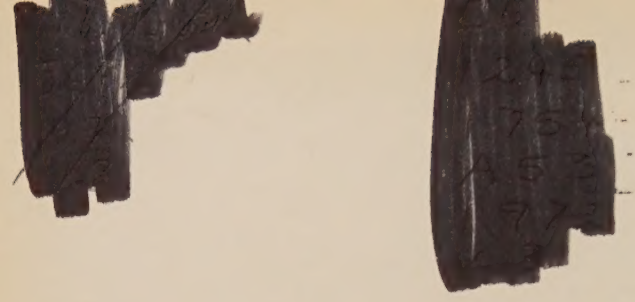

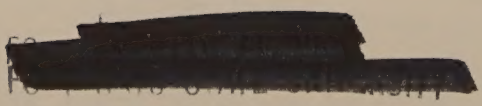

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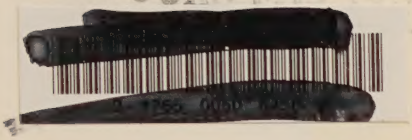

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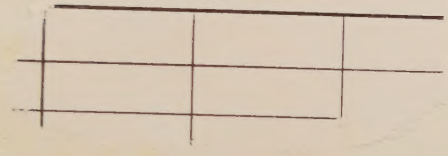

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SAMUEL JOHNSON

PRESIDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE

HIS CAREER AND WRITINGS

VOLUME III

THE CHURCHMAN

AMS PRESS
NEW YORK

Samuel Johnson

From an engraving by William S. Leney, who came to New York from England in 1805.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

PRESIDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE

HIS CAREER AND WRITINGS

EDITED BY

HERBERT AND CAROL SCHNEIDER

WITH A FOREWORD BY

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

VOLUME III

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PREFACE TO VOLUME THREE

The career of Samuel Johnson as a Churchman has been more adequately studied than his other activities. E. E. Beardsley emphasized this aspect in his histories and biographies, and there is voluminous material on the subject in the Johnson manuscripts. Only the strictly ecclesiastical writings have been included in this volume, that is, Johnson's disputes with Dissenters, some of his sermons and liturgical materials, and his official reports or communications to the Secretary and other officers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. All correspondence which contains other items of interest in addition to ecclesiastical matters has been relegated to other volumes, chiefly to Volume One. Even the greater part of Johnson's appeals for American bishops will be found there, as they are inseparable from his references to political issues and family affairs.

THE EDITORS

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Part I

CONCERNING EPISCOPACY

CONTENTS

1. My Present Thoughts concerning Episcopacy 1719
2. A Letter from Thomas Foxcroft to Samuel Johnson 1726

MY PRESENT THOUGHTS OF EPISCOPACY

with what I conceive may justify me in accepting
Presbyterial Ordination.
Written at West Haven, Dec. 20, Anno Dom. 1719.

Concerning Episcopacy and particularly with relation to me under my present circumstances I shall in the following paragraphs:

I. Set down my present apprehensions formed from the best light I can obtain, and

II. I shall consider what may be matter of justification to me under my present circumstances in receiving Presbyterial ordination.

And in the first place with respect to the church. I think Dr. Scot's description of it to be very accurate. "It is," says he, "the one universal society of all Christian people incorporated by the New Covenant in baptism under Jesus Christ its supreme head and distributed under lawful governors and pastors into particular churches holding communion with each other in all the essentials of Christian faith, worship and discipline." And this society is doubtless in the constitution, nature and design of it, distinct from all other societies in the world.

From which account of it, it appears that though the members of this society are of various nations and countries, dispersed into various and different parts of the world, yet there is but one catholic church whereof the various particular churches are members.

I say this church is one and this unity is founded on the universal consent and agreement of all its particular parts and members, in those things which are the essentials of Christianity, and their mutual charity for one another so agreeing though at the same time differing in things extra-essential and circumstantial.

But besides this I am persuaded that there ought to be and originally was also an external and visible unity and that in primitive times it was very much insisted on, at least in particular

churches. And for this reason I am no less persuaded that an external uniformity ought to be agreed on and established by the authority of the church, and that the measures of such an external and visible uniformity, being themselves lawful and established by lawful authority, ought to be held as sacred and inviolable, to be strictly observed and by no means receded from, by all that would be concerned for the maintaining of so sacred a thing as the peace and unity of the church.

And therefore whoever needlessly separates and breaks off from a church so established, is certainly guilty of the great sin of Scripture, for so sacred a thing ought the unity of the church to be held by every honest Christian that it cannot be a trivial, but must be a very weighty thing indeed that can justify separation.

But though a separation from a particular church may in itself be a schism, being really needless and causeless, yet to the person so doing it may not be so, provided he is really persuaded in his conscience after an honest and impartial inquiry, that he cannot continue in the communion of it without sin, and such a person may yet deserve the charity of every good man. And such I suppose to have been the case of many of our honest progenitors, who first came over to this land, and many other dissenters from the established church.

Bu so remote are the days of the primitive church, so obscure the accounts of it, and in some respects so different (men being then in many particulars of different apprehensions and tempers, as well as now) and therefore so liable to be interpreted to a different sense, according to the different hypotheses advanced, and so great the ignorance which had invaded and overspread the church in the greatest darkness of popery, and finally so little the ability or opportunity of most of the first reformers, just then emerging out of it, to examine thoroughly into the state of the primitive church, that it is more to be lamented than wondered at, that when they first set upon reformation they fell into so many different sects and parties, every one still esteeming themselves the most pure and primitive. And therefore I imagine that the separation of one particular church or sect of Christians, from another is a much more excusable evil now than it was in the first ages of Christianity, justly esteemed by the ancient fathers of the primitive church.

But to proceed, the church I conceive to be a well formed and well

regulated society under regulations peculiar to itself, and therefore as well as all other well regulated societies, must consist of a *pars regens and a pars regenda.* It must be under the direction of officers to whom the management of the public affairs of it doth belong, and what those offices are and who the officers, and how many degrees and orders of them are, are to be considered.

Now as to the two inferior orders of elders and deacons. There is no question with respect to them at present. But whereas there has been and still is in some parts of the church an order of men called bishops, whose office as such has been held to be the inspection and government of the church both clergy and laity, and the imposition of hands in the ordination of the clergy and confirmation of the laity within their respective districts, I am now concerned to be determined whether this order be of divine right and who these offices are by divine appointment appropriated to, so as to render it unlawful even upon the most urgent emergencies to recede from it?

And to this I answer that all prejudices laid aside, and so far as I can inform myself, I must confess that I am firmly persuaded and am constrained from as good evidences as the nature of the thing is now capable of, supposing it were really so, firmly to believe that Episcopacy was truly the primitive and apostolical form of church government, and that the apostolic office was designed to be a settled standing office in the church to the end of the world. And if there be any faith in Dr. Potter* (who seems to discourse of and represent those things with a spirit of true honesty and impartiality, as well as good temper), and if we may depend at all on the primitive [1] fathers of the church (supposing him and others to quote them with integrity) and on the most authentic historians of those times as Eusebius, etc., then it seems to me as evident as a thing of that nature can well be, that the bishops of those times were always accounted the successors of the apostles, and that there had been an uninterrupted succession of such apostolical bishops in the church at least for the four or five first centuries.

And accordingly from the undoubted testimonies of the fathers, it seems to me very clear that the office and business of that sacred order of men peculiar thereunto, according to the most primitive practice of the church, was the inspection and government thereof

* Of Church Government.

1 In a footnote are quotations from Ignatius and Cypria. [The Editors.]

and the ordination of the clergy, and confirmation of the laity, in which the Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of their hands, and that neither of these offices seems to have been accounted to be lawfully performed by either presbyters or deacons, especially at least without a special commission from them. And though their character was not confined to any place, nor was it unlawful for them to exercise any of these their offices any where, in the nature of the thing, yet for order's sake, they had ordinarily every one his own peculiar distinct province or district, and several presbyters and deacons and particular congregations under his care and jurisdiction. These things speak the writers of those times, a few passages whereof I have here collected, not to mention the considerably plain hint given of them in the Holy Scriptures.

And not only so, but in the next place I must own that I am fully convinced that such a condition is indeed most excellent in itself, as being in the best manner imaginable suited for the answering the ends for which any supposed constitution whatsoever can be calculated, exactly adapted to the nature of such a society as the church is, and of the most direct and best tendency to promote, preserve and maintain the peace and unity of the same and purity in profession and practice of the true religion therein.

And such is my opinion of it, and affection to it on the account hereof, that I would with a full approbation and complacency of mind and with the greatest delight and satisfaction submit to the orders of it, and should rejoice with all my heart if Providence should place me under such circumstances as should make it my duty so to do. And if I am misled in any of these my apprehensions concerning either the church or the constitution and government of it, I should be glad upon many accounts to be led into a better sense of things.

Having thus therefore considered the authority of Episcopacy, I shall now consider what may justify me in receiving Presbyterian ordination, where first I shall consider whether any circumstances a man can be under will justify him in receiving any other than Episcopal ordination? And then offer it to be considered whether the circumstances I am in are not sufficient to justify me in it.

And for the first of these we must make a wide distinction between a thing's being of moral and positive right. As for those things which are of a moral right, it is most certain that no necessity that we can be under can justify our disobedience with

respect to them. *Fiat justitia ruat coelum.* Life itself must not be dear to us when nothing but disobedience to the eternal laws of good and evil, can save it. But as for those things which are only of a positive nature, the case is much otherwise, for they have no intrinsic good or evil in them, but our duty with relation to them is merely built up on the arbitrary will of the lawgiver, and that will is determined by certain ends, for the attainment of which the institution and appointment is made, which ends when they cannot be attained the reason of the institution ceaseth, and therewith our obligation thereunto.

And therefore according to Dr. Scot, a man may be under such circumstances as may justify his neglect to observe such institutions, for in such a case, says he, "we may lawfully suppose that the same thereby dissolve our obligation to them," and he gives some instances in which the case was so in respect to sundry Jewish institutions, which God dispensed with their obedience unto, in putting them under such circumstances as made it impracticable. Such might be the case of David in eating shew bread. And we find the apostle Paul complied with the circumstances of the times in such cases, as in circumcising Timothy, which was then contrary to the Christian institution, and in several such cases.

Now suppose Episcopacy be of divine right, yet at most it is but of a positive and not of a moral nature. If therefore there be any circumstances will justify our neglecting to observe such institutions, it seems as if in this case I might be excused, supposing my circumstances are such as render my observance of it impracticable. Or supposing they are such as render it impossible that Episcopacy in my taking the orders of it, should in any measure answer the ends of it, which were the peace, order and advancement of the church; but that my so doing would be indeed utterly subversive of them. And therefore according to Dr. Scot, I may lawfully suppose, that God in his providence by placing me under such circumstances, does dissolve my obligation to the observance of this institution, and that therefore I may with a safe conscience neglect the observance of it, if at the same time I do it with a resolution to observe it, when the same Providence shall make it practicable.

Having thus stated the case, I leave it to impartial advice, whether this be good divinity or not, that any circumstances will justify me in what I propose to do? And if so, I submit it also

to be considered whether my circumstances are such? Which are these:

1. The passionate entreaties of a tender mother.

2. That my breaking forth upon an attempt of that nature would be of vastly more dis-service to the best interest of the church itself than my going over to it could be of service to it.

3. That it can't be without most fatal jealousies to the college, and the effects of it must be mischievous.

4. That I must thereby be exposed to great dangers and difficulties, to which I am a great stranger.

5. My want of that politeness and those qualifications which would be requisite in making such an appearance.

6. That in order to taking Episcopal order there are many things to be complied with which I do not sufficiently understand.

7. That the times, 'tis to be feared, are very difficult at home, and its likely not so good encouragement to such designs as might be wished for.

8. That although I seem tolerably well satisfied in these my thoughts, of the right of Episcopacy, yet considering the meanness of my advantages and the scantiness of my time hitherto, I have reason to be very jealous whether I have not too much precipitated into these opinions.

And then finally perhaps I may in the meantime be doing some service to promote the main interest of religion, though it be not in a method so desirable.

FINIS

Upon these principles I continued easy about two years and then upon a more careful examination of the matter, I found I could not with a good conscience continue to administer in the name of Christ when I was under a persuasion that I had never had a regular mission from him, and thereupon I thought it my bounded duty to come over to the Episcopal side that I might live and die in the unity of the church. Accordingly I with Dr. Cutler, Mr. Hart, Mr. Whittelsey, Mr. Eliot, Mr. Wetmore, and Mr. Browne, made our public declaration for the Church, September 13, 1722, at Yale College, New Haven.

Ps. 139, 23, 24. [Text in Hebrew.[2]]

[2] When Hebrew texts or words are inserted in the manuscripts merely for adornment or a show of erudition, and contribute nothing to the sense of the passage, they have been omitted in this publication. [The Editors.]

A Letter from Thomas Foxcroft to Samuel Johnson

Aug. 12, 1726

Rev'd. Sir:—

Last Saturday came to hand your very acceptable favor of July 5, for which I return you the sincerest thanks; and am obliged to you for the candid reception of my letter, as well as the frankness wherewith you've opened yourself to me upon this occasion.

As to my calling your late change an extraordinary turn, which you seem to take ill, it was innocently mean, and the phrase appears to me as unexceptionable as can be: since you are one of the first instances in this country of an ordained minister's turning to the Church of England; and since the renouncing Presbyterial ordination, after once received, is a thing very rarely heard of in any part of the world. These considerations are enough (I think) to show the propriety of that epithet; and in truth were the grounds of my using it. I had no design to reflect on the church you went over to.

I am pleased, Sir, with the short view you gave me of your faith, as to the tenor of the Gospel Covenant, and am glad we are so well agreed in things most necessary to salvation, the inward vitals and practicals of Christianity. But am sorry to find you advancing your opinion about Episcopacy to so high a degree as to rank it among the fundamentals of religion; which must needs draw after it very prodigious consequences; such as I can hardly imagine you will plead for and such as (were there no other point wherein you differed from us) might afford matter of grief and provocation to zealous Presbyterians; tho' not justify them in any fury and baseness towards you. It was not merely your conforming to the Episcopal Church, but the open reproach you cast on the Presbyterian Communion by abdicating the orders you had received in it, and going into a professed separation from it, as schismatical and dangerous. This 'twas that put such an edge on some men's resentments, and provoked the pity of others. And truly, Sir, here was all the stumbling to me, at least the accent of the offense. If you could have obtained Episcopal consecration in

such a way as to leave a salvo for your former ordination, and secure the validity of your ministry while under a Presbyterian character, and had submitted to the imposition of the hands of the bishop only as a legal qualification for employment in the church which of all others you thought best constituted, and which you were resolved to live in the communion of — if so, there would have been less room for objection and censure. Be sure for my own part I should have had abundantly less to say. But it appears very shocking to me, that you should scruple even the validity of your Presbyterian ministry, and disclaim your original orders as *null*, retract your first vows, and deny all your consequent administrations, altho' (I doubt not) owned of God by his blessing in some instances and measures, crowning them with desired success. Indeed I confess these two opinions, the absolute necessity of prelatical ordination, and utter invalidity of the Presbyterian ministry, do carry a proportion in them, and square pretty well; the latter seeming a just deduction from the former. But I can't see how you will reconcile those principles to Christian charity, to the common Protestant profession, or even the doctrine of your own church; much less to Holy Scripture, the general current of which seems to me strong against them. And while I have been possessed of such apprehensions, you must think it very natural and almost unavoidable for me to be solicitous for you and wonder at your conduct, *i. e.*, at your embracing such principles, seeking re-ordination, etc., and be desirous to know what it is you ground those notions upon; from what fountain you derive them. They are points certainly of very high importance; and I was obliged to think you wouldn't give in to such conclusions without very substantial promises, weighed with the utmost seriousness, and evidently (to you) founded in Scripture and reason, if not likewise supported by incontestible antiquity. But being ignorant of the particular proofs and arguments you went upon, I thought it not an improper freedom to apply to you privately for information, and am glad I'm so happy as to have it taken friendly at my hands.

You have gratified me not a little in setting down the course of thinking which led you over to the Episcopal Communion; and I designed now to have gone on to some remarks upon it. But because there are several things in it, which it seems needful for you to explain yourself upon, I shall suspend that attempt for the present; and only mention the particulars which want a little illustra-

tion, in order to my taking up right conceptions of your scheme. For I am not willing to run the hazard of quarrelling in the dark, and contending only against my own imaginations while I mistake the sense of your terms.

Let me, Sir, inquire then (in a frame nothing captious):

1. What you mean by being in unity with the body of Christ, with the primitive church, with the church in all ages? And what your notion of schism, that schism which you judge so heinous and dangerous a sin? And whether you intended to load me with this guilt, where you charge me with being in a state of unjustifiable separation from the unity of the church?

2. What the special means of that unity; the particular *vinculum* or medium by which we are joined to the body of Christ, and united with the primitive church?

3. How am I to understand you when you say: "That you esteem Episcopacy an essential (tho' it is but an external) of religion?" Whether you mean the doctrine as you hold it, is one of the fundamental articles of faith; or the office one of the essential constituents of the *pars regens* of a particular church; or necessary to the being or unity of the church? Or how?

4. What do you intend in that passage: "Certainly your or my opinion whatever it be, is not Scripture, even tho' expressed in the words of Scripture, unless it be the real, genuine, original sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost?"

5. How far down will you deduce the period which you call the first and purest ages of the Christian Church? How many centuries will you take into the venerable antiquity, which you make a text or standard to know the true sense of Scripture in controverted texts by?

6. What is the true form of Episcopal government, which you plead a *jus divinum* for? What the peculiar essential powers of a bishop, and what the extent of his charge? Whether he must necessarily have a number of mere presbyters in subjection to him, and have the authoritative inspection of several congregations? Whether he may claim a negative voice in all matters of government; and whether ordination, excommunication, etc., are acts done by his sole prerogative?

7. Whether you think Timothy, Titus, and the Angels of the Seven Churches, were bishops *formaliter*; of the same kind or

specific order with our English prelates? And whether you find the present model of Episcopal government in England conformable to the ancient Episcopacy? And that universally established in the first and purest ages?

8. Whether this form was held by the Fathers to be of divine institution, and a fundamental of Christianity?

9. Whether this kind of Episcopacy was first appointed in the persons of the Holy Apostles? And where you find the Apostolical Commission?

10. Upon what particular Scriptures do you found your notion of subject (simple) presbyters?

Once more, what apprehensions have you of the nature of ordination? In a word, where is really your chief dependence in this controversy; on the canon of Scripture, or authority of Fathers?

Those are all the inquiries (and you'll perhaps think there's enough of 'em for once) which I shall offer at this time. Before I proceed any further, it seems to me necessary to come to some conclusion about your meaning and judgment in the premises. Wherefore I desire you'll state your notions fully and give me the determinate sense of all your terms, that I mayn't run into confusion or impertinence, through a misunderstanding of you anywhere, or for want of an exact account of the scheme you go upon. You very well know, that unity, schism, episcopacy, ordination, etc., are words that admit of different senses and applications. You also know there's a variety of schemes among conformists; that they defend prelacy upon very different principles. So that it seems necessary for you to let me into your particular sentiments; else I shall be in danger of making excursions upon arguments little to the purpose, and you'll tell me, the substance of what I offer is very much beside the question. I shall be as glad as you to come to the pinch of the controversy, if we can but hit upon it. For if I am not very grossly deceived in myself, I hate impertinent wrangling, as much as any one. Where then, I pray, is the main hinge, the narrow of the dispute? Please, Sir, to show your opinion; and come to the point as soon as you will. It seems by the universal strain of the relation you give me of the manner and motives of your conversion to the Church of England (by the train of thought in which you were led on) that antiquity is your grand support, your final refuge. That in the first method of controversy, by comparing

Scripture with Scripture, you could attain to no more than a strong probability on the side of prelacy; but were forced to take your second rule and inquire after matter of fact, in the records of primitive times, before you could come to anything of a moral certainty, and resolution in your own mind. Now, Sir, please to tell me if this be a true state of the case; and then say how you choose to have the dispute managed, whether by your first or second rule. For although I think in the first method of arguing there will be the greatest prospect of light and agreement, or at least of dispatch; yet I am not unwilling to proceed with you upon the other rule, if you are really of opinion that this is the best foot to put the debate upon; that there's no hope of ever coming to any agreement without it, or that in this way the pinch of the controversy will lie in a narrower compass, and be more easily come at.

And now, good Sir, since you have taken your turn to be serious, and have thought proper (which indeed was nothing but what I might reasonably expect, and do not find fault with, but take kindly from you) to address me so solemnly on the like head as I wrote to you upon; I will not be backward to confess to you that I often disputed for Episcopacy, when at the College, and leaned pretty much to the Church of England; yet I must do myself the justice to observe to you that even at the worst (pardon this language; you know I allude to an expression of your own) I was not so perfectly satisfied in all the terms of conformity as ever to imagine I should actually take Orders. But as I grew to years of riper capacity, by a more diligent and impartial weighing the arguments on the Presbyterian side, than the heart and temerity of my infant years would admit of, the prejudices of education gradually wore off and I had not long looked about me, in the studies of Divinity, the experiences of religion, and observations upon the state of Christendom, before I found reason to think the churches in New England (I mean the established or original churches of the country) to be in their constitution and frame (for the substance) agreeable to the Word of God, and to have more of that pure and vital religion prevailing in them, which is the glory of the Christian name, the crown and strength and beauty of any church and the best seal of its ministry, than I could perceive in the Episcopal communion any where. This last reflection indeed very early occurred to me; and as it is none of the least arguments for the

validity of the ministry in these churches, so it was a consideration that had its influence upon me, first to suspect the non-necessity of Episcopal ordination, and then to allow the Presbyterian pleas a more serious unbiased and deliberate examination; which in time brought me to a pretty thorough approbation of the way of these churches, and finally to accept of ordination to the ministry in them. And I bless God I have never had occasion to repent my choice; but enjoy a great deal of comfort and satisfaction in their communion, trusting that I experience the gracious promised presence of our Blessed Savior in them, and believing them to have in no small measure that unity of the spirit, which I would most of all covet, and without which all other pretended unity or uniformity is of no significance, of no value with me.

Indeed you are pleased to vote the state I am in, a state of unjustifiable separation, and to bring a very heavy charge against me, the most awful and terrible in the world, which (where true and grounded) may well make any considering soul tremble! But as I am sure neither my state nor temper is schismatical; so I'm persuaded your severe imputations are without all just occasion, and really indefensible — contrary to the sense of the universal church in her purest ages, and even the known profession of your own church in her purer state at the Reformation, when the Church of Scotland and the foreign churches, that were Presbyterian, were owned as true and sound branches of the Church Catholic; which (if I may without offense give you back your own words) must deserve to be a little regarded by us, wise moderns! And if there be any weight in the suffrages of the best reformers and most valuable of the primitive fathers, I have abundant reason to believe, it is the truth I stand upon! And if it be the truth, none can justly blame me for being willing to appear in the defense of it, and contribute my best endeavors to help lay the dust that's raised at any time to pervert poor people from the right way, for whom Christ died.

As to the two books you are so satirical upon; whether the reprinting of 'em was a good work or bad, I had no hand at all in it, that I remember; though I must be free to say, I can't go your length in the condemnation of them that had.

And as to the pamphlet I sent you, entiled *A Vindication, etc.*, though there are some things in it argued for the Presbyterian

hypothesis, which I imagine will not admit of a very easy answer; yet many things and some too of the first consideration in this dispute, are there scarce touched upon; the reason of which must be obvious to every one that looks into the title page. And permit me to say, if you judge the texts controverted are but little to the purpose, it's not so much the fault of the vindicator, as of Mr. Barclay and his defender; one or other of which gave the occasion to debate upon them, either by directly pressing them into their own service, or singling them out from other Scripture proofs on the opposite side to make their remarks upon. The vindicator, I presume, has reached his end, if what he has offered is a just and full reply to the book (and its defense) that first engaged him in the controversy, so far as it pretends to meddle with Scripture evidence. And had not the gentleman who undertook to be Mr. B.'s defender, despaired of ever making good several of the arguments and notions advanced in that book, I can't but think he would have made a more particular and direct defense at first, and have replied to the vindication before now. Indeed, I grant it would have been useless and endless for him to reply, and he has acted a wise part in throwing the pen out of his hand, unless he intended to lay the ill-judged (not to use those harsh epithets impertinent and wrangling) method of managing the controversy which he began with. But if a person of candor, ingenuity and a real gentlemanly spirit, would take up the argument, as it must needs be handled with better discretion, and more to advantage; so the adverse party would expect more handsome treatment, and perhaps return in full measure. And though nothing altogether new should happen to be said on the subject, yet possibly some things may be set in a new and clearer light to one or other of us, for our recovery from error, or establishment in the truth. Forgive my presumption if I say, as great as the authors are you mention, yet perhaps ne'er a one of them singly has said so much as to leave no room for further inquiry; and all of 'em put together, I suppose, haven't so exhausted the theme, but that it may be of some service still to write upon it, at least in this way of private letters. And indeed I'm humbly of opinion that for a man to sit down and employ his own pen upon the controversy is the best method to digest his thoughts, to brighten his views, and mature his judgment. Under these apprehensions it was (and not from an itch of disputing, or a vain dream of

anything new and extraordinary on my part) that I made bold to propose to you an epistolary conversation; and despair not of its turning to good account in the issue, if we don't forget the temper and seriousness, which becomes the nature and weight of the argument we are upon.

Now, Sir, I heartily join in the prayer which concludes your letter; and beg leave to conclude mine with the Collect for St. Matthias' Day:

May Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas did choose his faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that his Church being always preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen! 'Tis the unfeigned wish of,

Sir,

Your brother
and servant,

Thomas Foxcroft

Boston, August 12, 1726.

Part II

THREE LETTERS TO DISSENTERS

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A LETTER

From a Minister of the Church of England to his dissenting Parishioners, etc.

My dear, tho' mistaken Brethren;

My heart's desire and prayer to God for you and yours, is, that you might be saved. This likewise has been, and is my earnest and constant endeavor; for your souls are very precious, for whom our dear Redeemer spilt his precious blood. I am sorry you will not give me more opportunity to serve the interest of your souls, which I should gladly do with all my heart. But you are taught to keep at a distance from me, and beware of my conversation: and all imaginable pains have been taken to frighten you from coming within the doors of the Church, which, at least, is directly contrary to the Apostle's advice, 1 Thes. 5. 21, "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

However, because you will not give me opportunity to promote the spiritual good of your souls, neither at my habitation, nor at the House of God, I have taken this method to wait upon you at your own, and I hope you will not shut your eyes against the light, or be so prejudiced against the title of this paper, as not to read it carefully, and consider it seriously and impartially.

"I bear you record, that you have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," Rom. 10, 2. You are, many of you, seriously and religiously disposed, and heartily concerned to be saved; but, give me leave to say, you are unhappily mistaken and misled in sundry weighty matters of religion. Did you rightly understand the true state of things, did you really know the true principles of our Church, and how exactly agreeable her doctrine, discipline and government are to the holy Scriptures, and the true primitive church, as founded by the apostles, I say, did you understand things as they really are, you would immediately fly into her bosom, as into the ark, and not be contented a day out of our communion.

But the truth is, there are so many falshoods and slanders industriously spread about, to cast disgrace on the Church, that, no wonder you are frighted from her, and afraid to be concerned with her; for it would indeed deeply grieve any indifferent, serious and considerate person, to hear what injurious mis-representations, evil reports and groundless reproaches she suffers from some who call themselves Christians, may our Heavenly Father forgive them, and grant them better minds, for they know not what they do.

But I will observe to you in particular sundry false and groundless stories, which you are made to believe concerning the Church of England, by which you may see how wickedly you are imposed on and we abused.

1. Some of the wicked books scattered about among you, would persuade you, that our church is little better than popery, and symbolizes with the Church of Rome.

Answ. Nothing can be more false and abusive than this: for those who first laid the foundation of our church, burnt at the stake because they could not comply with popery. And never did any writers so effectually confute popery as ours have, and we have as much zeal against and hatred to popery as you can have. Nay, if you would give me opportunity, I could make it appear, that some of your principles are nearer akin to popery than any of ours, and that there is nothing peculiarly taught or practised in the Church of England, but was taught and practised in the Church long before popery was heard of in the world. Do we deny you the Scriptures or public worship in your own language? Do we worship images, or pray to saints or angels.? Do we teach transubstantiation, or deny the Cup to the laity? Do we teach the Pope's su-

premacy or infallibility, or pray souls out of Purgatory? These and the like are the absurdities of popery, which our church abhors as much as you can do: so that your Delaune and the rest of them are abominably injurious to us, in endeavoring to fasten popery upon us, and by the same reasons they might as well charge it upon you. For thus he argues, the church of England use the *Te Deum*, the Responses, etc., so do the Church of Rome. Nay, he goes on, and says, the Church of England use the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, and the Psalms of David, and so does the Church of Rome. Does this prove them to be popery? Why, just as much as it proves the two Sacraments to be popery. And indeed he did hold infant baptism and sprinkling to be popery as much as any thing else in the Church of England. And therefore his arguments do as much prove you to be papists as us.

You are told, our church is a persecuting bloodthirsty church. I answer, this is a most abusive insinuation; for it is easy to prove, that the Church of England never shed a drop of any mans blood in the world for his religion. It is true the civil government hath sometimes imprisoned and fined persons for seditious practices, who pretended zeal for religion in what they did: but you are the most unreasonable people in the world, to talk of persecution at this time of day, when you know that you have for almost 50 years enjoyed a free liberty and uninterrrupted toleration. But if you are for looking back, remember the blessed days (as some of you call them) of Oliver Cromwell, when the Dissenters were uppermost, and the Church was suppressed, and her clergy sequestered, plundered, imprisoned and barbarously treated, and forbid to perform the least part of their office. Or if you are for looking into Scotland, don't forget how barbarously the Episcopal Clergy were turned out of doors and persecuted, when the Presbyterians got the upper hand. Instances these are enough to shut your mouths, if you had any modesty: however I have nothing to say for persecution, I abhor it as much as you do; only I would suggest, that we of the Church of England here have but too much reason to apprehend, from sundry instances of the severe oppressive treatment we have met with from some of you, that if we were in your power, there are not a few would persecute us, at least as much as ever any Dissenters were persecuted in the world.

Some have been so ridiculous as to try to make you believe, that the martyrs in Queen Mary's days (and particularly John Rogers)

were Presbyterians. I answer, that nothing can be a more absurd or false pretence than this; for it is certain and can be easily made to appear that some of those who were burnt at the stake at that time, were the very men that composed our Prayer-Book, and sealed their religion with their blood, and they all suffered long before the Presbyterians were heard of in England. And this puts me in mind to observe to you, how wickedly some impose upon you, in making you believe, that we of the Church in this Country are not true Churchmen, such as they are in England, and such as they were from the beginning of the Reformation. Now this is a most injurious slander; for we use constantly those very same prayers now as were composed by those old holy martyrs, and the very same Service here as they do in England, word for word, without the least variation. But it is insupportably abusive in any of you, as some do, to charge us with being High-flyers and Jacobites, when you know in your consciences, that we constantly pray for our most Gracious Sovereign King George, and steadily practice and preach up a sincere attachment to his person and government. And I challenge you to produce an instance of any one person in these parts, that ever mentioned the Pretender's name but with abhorrence.

Some of the wicked books among you would persuade you, that our church places all religion in mere outward ceremonies, and holds no regeneration but baptism, no necessity of the inward work of the spirit, etc. I answer, this is all absolutely false. For tho' we hold the great expediency of outward rites and observances for unity and uniformity, for decency and order in the worship of God; yet we don't place all religion in them. On the contrary, we hold that all outward performances without an inward change of heart and a good life, are of no account with God. 'Tis true, we call baptism external regeneration, according to St. Paul, Tit. 3. 5., who there calls it the washing of regeneration; but we deny that baptism alone can save us without the inward regeneration wrought in us by the mighty power of the Spirit of God. So that these vile books do most falsely misrepresent and wickedly abuse us, and we wish you therefore to consider seriously, how little those are to be believed or regarded, who spread such false and scandalous books among you, to impose upon you.

5. You are told that we don't hold the necessity of conversion

and real goodness, to qualify us for the Sacrament, and that we receive all without distinction. I answer the direct contrary to this is true; for tho' our charity is larger than yours, yet we hold the same qualifications necessary as you do. This appears to any one that will read our Exortations to the Communion. We hold no man can come acceptably without faith, repentance and new obedience, whereas some of your teachers hold the Sacrament a converting ordinance, which the writers of our church deny.

6. Some would persuade you, that we take upon us to forgive sins; whereas we only declare God's forgiveness to all true penitents. And that we pray for the dead, for this wise reason forsooth, because we pray that God would not remember against us our iniquities, nor the iniquities of our fore-fathers. Can it be that people would dispute such things as these, were it not purely for disputing sake, or different for such reasons, unless merely for dissenting sake? Surely they deserve no reply but that of pity for poor ignorant people that are imposed upon by them, and for the poor trifling disputers that by such means impose upon them.

Many things are objected against us as superstitious, such as the surplice, god-fathers and god-mothers in baptism, and the cross after it, and the holy days, and the like. I put these things together for brevity because I would make the quicker dispatch. And I answer in the first place, there are very wise and good reasons for the propriety decency and expediency of these practices, particularly, as to the surplice. What can be more proper, than to distinguish the sacred services by a peculiar garment, for which we have the example of God himself in the Mosaic dispensation, which, tho' not binding upon Christians, may be a good precedent to them, in appointing what is decent in public worship. Thus in Ezekiel 44. 17, it is ordered, that when they come to minister in the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments: to which it is very likely St. John alludes, in Rev. 19, 8, even in Gospel times, when the Church should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is (the emblem of) the righteousness of saints. I don't offer these as Scripture evidences of the necessity, but of the lawfulness, propriety and significancy of this appointment. And how mean a thing is it, and how despicable a weakness, to dispute and contend about or take offence at the matter, color or shape of a garment? It betrays a littleness of mind, and a mean narrowness of

soul. And then as to god-fathers and god-mothers, or sponsors in baptism, what can be more proper or expedient, when a child is admitted into covenant by baptism, than that since the child cannot answer for itself, some body should answer its part in the covenant, in its name? And that there should be double security for its Christian education? You don't think it unreasonable in your temporal affairs, to have bondsmen jointly engaged with the person immediately concerned in paying of money; and can it then be thought improper, that there should be the like double security insisted upon for this more important matter, the Christian education of a child, in case of mortality, poverty, or any other inability or want of duty in the parents? And as to the sign of the cross; what can be more proper or significant, after a child is baptized into the faith of a crucified Savior, and is publicly declared to be admitted into the number of Christ's flock, than to use this sign, to intimate to us, that we should be so far from being ashamed of, that with St. Paul, Gal. 6. 14, we should glory in the Cross of Christ. And this was a practice that always obtained in the church from the earliest ages, and even several hundred years before the day of popery, as is plain from the testimonies of St. Cyprian and Tertullian, within little more than a hundred years of the apostles, which renders it highly probable that it was the very thing alluded to in Rev. 7. 3, where we read of sealing the servants of God in their foreheads, so far is it from being a mark of the beast, as some opprobriously, and I may say, profanely call it! And lastly, what can be more properly and wisely done, than to set apart particular days and seasons to commemorate the several steps which our glorious Redeemer took in accomplishing our redemption, and his apostles in propagating the knowledge of it. For by this means every minister is obliged once a year to explain, and the people have opportunity as often to hear opened, each article of the Christian faith, and so a lively sense of every one of them is the better kept up in their minds; whereas you may go to meeting several years (and perhaps all your days) and never hear several articles of the Christian faith, such as the Trinity, the Resurrection or Ascension of Christ, or Descent of the Holy Ghost, once particularly explained or insisted upon, and the sense of them is in danger of being lost.

Object. But you will say, where has God commanded these things, and does he not give this reason for the unlawfulness of such things,

that he commanded them not? Jer. 7. 31. I answer no: for that text don't speak of things in their own nature indifferent, but what is notoriously sinful and idolatrous, building high places and worshipping idols, which when he says he had not commanded, the meaning is he had forbidden them. And it betrays great (not to say wilful) ignorance of the figures used often in Scripture language, to put such an interpretation on this text. So that the proper question in these and the like cases, is not where has God commanded them? But where has he forbidden them? For it is certain, that we may lawfully do any thing that God has not forbidden; and I dare challenge you to show one text, that forbids these or any thing else that the Church requires. But then let me ask in my turn, where has God command'ed your relations as terms of communion, or your form of church covenant, or that you should keep a fast on the 15th of April (suppose) or a Thanksgiving on the 9th of November? You have no rule in Scripture for keeping these days. O, you will say, our governors command these days to be observed, and we are commanded to obey them! Very good; the same say we: do you justify yourselves in these matters, and with the same breath you justify us in every thing we plead for. God has no where forbidden us these practices, and our governors both in church and state have commanded them, and God has commanded us to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, I Pet. 2, 13, and to obey them that have the rule over us, who watch for our souls, Heb. 13, 17, and therefore we must observe these rites and days in obedience to him as well as them.

Object. But you will say, is not this teaching for doctrines the commandments of men? Mat. 15, 9. I answer, no: for what the Pharisees were there condemned for, was 1. advancing human inventions into essential doctrines, as tho' they were divine and necessary in themselves; whereas we declare these things still indifferent in their own nature. You seem rather guilty of this, in insisting on your church covenant, and (in some places) relations, as terms of communion, under the notion of their being divine ordinances, and in making the absolute predestination of particular persons, an essential doctrine, which really is no where taught in Scripture. 2. The Pharisees are here accused of justling out and setting aside divine commands, by, and for the sake of human ordinances: Thus v. 6. They set aside the fifth commandment by their

Corban, Mark 7, 11, whereas we challenge you to show one Scripture doctrine rejected, or one divine law set aside and neglected by the Church of England.

Object. But you say, why will you offend your weak brethren by these things? St. Paul says, I Cor. 8, 13; Rom. 14, he would rather not eat flesh while he lived than offend. I answer, I am glad you are sensible that you are but weak brethren, as indeed you really are if you take offence at such innocent harmless things. But pray wherein do we offend you? To offend in the apostle's sense, is to lay a stumbling-block before our brother, so as to cause him to sin. Now I can't see wherein the church is guilty of tempting you into any sinful practices; so far from this, that I would wish you to observe, that the apostle in those places is speaking of things, not only indifferent in themselves, but those concerning which neither divine nor human authority had interposed to command or forbid, with respect to which indeed we must become all things to all men; but does it hence follow, that we must disobey God, or even lawful human authority for fear of offending? Nay, so far from this, that we should properly, according to the apostle's sense, offend, if we should not conform to the laws of both church and state; for then our example of disobedience to authority would tend to confirm those that dissent from us in their disobedience.

Lastly a great noise and clamor is raised against us about *Arminianism*, and you are told we are *Arminians*. To this I answer, that we hold no doctrines now but what were held and taught in our church long before *Arminius* was heard of as I can make appear from sundry of the writings of our first reformers and martyrs, Cranmer, Hooper, and Ridley, etc. And if *Arminius* happened to agree with them in some of his notions, I know no reason however, why we should be called after his name. In short, we have no business with *Arminius*, he was a Dutch Presbyterian, and we are none of his followers. We call no man master upon earth, for one is our master in heaven, we are followers of Jesus Christ and his noble army of martyrs, who sealed the truth with their blood. In a word we hold no doctrines but what were always held from the beginning, even in the purest times of Christianity, none but what the apostles every where taught, and are plainly revealed to us in the holy Scriptures, which our church asserts to be her only rule of faith.

Indeed some would wickedly persuade you, that we lay aside the

Scriptures, and build on human authority. This as well as all the rest, is a groundless slander. 'Tis true, we make use of the ancient writers, to help us in finding out the sense of Scriptures, and appeal to the certain facts of the earliest ages of the church, as our best guides in doubtful cases, where the sense of Scripture is disputed, to determine the true meaning of it; but still that is our rule both of faith and manners. Of the falsehood of all these slanders and misrepresentations, and the truth of what I have here asserted, I could yet further abundantly convince you if I had opportunity, and should gladly do it; for while you are thus miserably imposed upon, and led on in ignorance and mistake, I can't but look on you with the greatest compassion, and wish you to consider the danger there is left, while the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch.

But perhaps you would desire to know what I have against you; you think your fathers were very good men, and came here for the sake of religion and you can scarcely be persuaded to think they could be mistaken. To this I answer, that I believe I think as charitably of your fathers as any of you do; I am ready to believe that they meant well, and endeavored to please God according to the best of their light: but I don't therefore think they were perfect. On the contrary I am persuaded, they greatly, tho' I hope ignorantly, erred in some things; and indeed I suppose you think so too, for you have greatly departed from them in several instances, and are ashamed of many of their notions and practices. Nay, your teachers have in some cases used the same arguments against them as we do, as some of you very well know, and if you think them wrong in some things, why mayn't I think so in others, and at the same time have as much charity for them as you have.

Indeed I own they and you too are right in many things, nay in most of the essentials and fundamentals of religion. For you join with us in teaching the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a sober, godly and righteous life, and of the supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to repent, believe and obey the Gospel, and that our acceptance with God depends wholly on the free grace of God, and the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ. It is happy that we agree thus far, and so far as we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, and mind the same things. Give me leave however to observe to you,

that there are some very weighty points of religion wherein you grievously err in separating from us, besides others of less moment, and to offer them as so many reasons, why you should return into the bosom of the church and come into our communion, and you will plainly see under each head, how expressly they are founded on the holy Scripture, and that you have left that holy rule in departing from us. Particularly,

1. You have cast off the original government which Christ, or at least his Apostles under the guidance of his Holy Spirit, established in his church, in the order of bishops, and in the room of it have set up what is next akin to none, as is evident from the sad effects of your constitution, in the many disorders, contentions and confusions which you miserably see and feel abounding and daily increasing among you. Indeed, you pretend to retain the orders of elders and deacons; but as to deacons, you know that your ministers refuse to ordain them by laying on of hands, wherein they act directly contrary to Scripture, Acts 6. 6. And as to your elders, you know that what ordination they, many of them, originally had, were performed by the brethren, mere laymen, who were allowed to ordain in the pure days of your fore-fathers, as appears by the platform agreed upon at Cambridge in the Year 1649. Chap. 9. The like certainly was never heard of before in the whole Christian Church. But suppose your ministers were originally ordained by bishops; yet the bishops that ordained them never gave them power to ordain others: so that any one Captain or Justice of the Peace, however lawfully commissioned, might as well take upon them to give commissions to others and set up other Captains or Justices of the Peace as those ministers, even upon this supposition, could set up and commissionate others. But your error is aggravated in this, that you set up in opposition to bishops, in opposition to that government which was at first established in the church, and is thro' God's goodness established in our own nation and mother country, and this from a wrong notion of a particular church, as is plain from the holy Scriptures, which do not call a particular congregation of Christians a particular church: for the Scripture notion of a particular church comprehended all the Christians in a city and country adjacent, however so many Christians or congregations of Christians were contained in it. Thus we read of the Church of Jerusalem, the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Corinth, etc. That the case was thus with the rest, we may learn from

what we read of the Church of Ephesus, Acts 20, 17, in which one church you there see, there were a number of elders, and consequently doubtless many congregations; for the apostle had labored there three years and an half, and if we may judge of his success by other places, Acts 2, 41; 4, 4, where 3000 were converted by one sermon, 5000 by another, so mightily grew the Word and prevailed, Acts 19, 20, there must have been many congregations, as there were many elders, in this one church, and over these the apostles afterward appointed Timothy, to exercise government and jurisdiction, as appears by his epistles to him, and the like of Titus in Crete, 1 Tit. 5. And that this government was to continue is evident, in that 30 years after this, when there must be yet many more congregations and elders, there was still but one Church of Ephesus, and but one Angel, or but one ecclesiastical governor or bishop there, which was also the case of the other six churches of Asia, as appears from Rev. 2. and 3. So that you plainly see, these Scripture churches were not such as they call churches here in New England. Thus far the Scriptures speak in this matter, and we are well assured we don't misunderstand them, because we find plainly from the history of the church that this order of church government was established in all the churches, and continued down from the days of the apostles thro' all the ages of the church, to which our bishops have succeeded, and no other was ever tho't of for 1500 years; so that your way is but a late invention, that was never heard of till within these 200 years; for I challenge all your instructors to show one church in the first and purest ages of Christianity that was ever governed after the Presbyterian or Congregational manner. So that in casting off this order of bishops, you seem to me to have rejected an ordinance of God, and might as well have cast off any other of his instructions that you do retain. Nay I am ready to make it appear, that there is at least as much (if not more) evidence for bishops as for infant baptism, or the first day Sabbath, and that the Anabaptists are rather more excusable some of them in rejecting the first day Sabbath, and all in denying baptism to infants, than you in denying submission to bishops. But I will be more brief in giving an account of the other reasons I have against you. Therefore,

2. The second thing I have against you is (what I have already had occasion to mention) that you do not follow the apostle's rule, to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. And obey

them that have the rule over you. 1 Pet. 2, 13. Heb. 13, 17. This you are bound to do, because God expressly commands it, and that not only for wrath but also for conscience sake, Rom. 13, 5. So that you cannot discharge a good conscience to God, unless you be obedient to those he has set over you. There is one exception to this, and that is, in case our rulers command what is contrary to the Word of God: but you could never prove that the church established by King and Parliament commands any thing contrary to the Word of God.

3. For this reason I cannot see how your separation from us can be justified or excuted, and it is clear to me, that you have broken the peace of the Body of Christ, by needless divisions, and the apostle requires us. Rom. 16, 17, to mark such as cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine we have learned, and avoid them. Indeed if we had imposed on you any doctrine or practice contrary to the Word of God, I own we should then be the schismatics: but in as much as we require nothing of you that God has forbidden, I don't see how you can clear your selves from being guilty of schism.

4. I think you are to be justly faulted that you do not read the Word of God in your public worship. This was the practice of Christ himself, who stood up to read in the synagogue, Luke 4, 6. And the apostles appeal to and approve of this practice, Acts 13, 27, that the writings of the prophets were read every Sabbath Day: and Timothy was required 1 Eph. 4, 13, to give attendance to reading as well as exhortation and doctrine. So that I cannot conceive how you came to be so conceited of what you call your gifts, as to justle out the reading of God's holy Word. If you say, you can read it at home: I answer, you can also read sermons and pray at home, so this plea equally concludes against all public worship.

5. You seem to me to break an express law of Christ, in that you do not use the Lord's Prayer in your worship: for he commanded expressly, Luke 11, 2, "When ye pray, say, Our Father," etc. By which it is plain, he requires that this prayer be always used when we address our selves to God, especially in public. Not indeed that we should use no other prayer, but however, that this should not be omitted: and I am sure a better cannot be devised. And what could tempt you to throw it out of your public worship, I cannot conceive, unless it were that you thought yours were better than Christ's.

6. You have laid aside public forms of prayer, and in room of them have set up the extempore way, wherein you depend on the mere invention of your minister, and so you cannot be agreed before hand what to offer up to God, because you don't know what it will be; whereas our Savior makes it a condition of our being heard that we should be agreed touching any thing we would ask, Mat. 18, 19. This we can't be in your assembly, unless (like the papists) we put an implict faith in the minister. Now we in the church are free from this difficulty; for our service is taken, at least two thirds, if not three quarters of it, word for word, out of the Scripture, and all conformed to Scripture, and we all know what we are going to do, and so are prepared to offer up our address to God unanimously, with the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, Eph. 4, 3, and to lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting, 1 Tim. 2, 8. And besides your extempore way is liable to many rash and unbecoming expressions, and therefore directly contrary to the wise man's advice, Eccles. 5, be not rash with thy mouth, nor let thy heart hasten to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few. For these and the like reasons all the wise and holy men of old, and all ancient churches, both Jewish and Christian, have ever used forms of prayer carefully composed. Thus David composed many forms of prayer and praise, and his psalms were ever used in public worship, by both Jews and Christians, and expressly commanded by St. Paul, Eph. 5, 19, Col. 3, 16, and Solomon used a form in the dedication of the temple. 1 Kings 8, 22, Hezekiah, Isai. 37, 15 and 38, 9; and Daniel, 9, 4, used forms. And our Savior composed a form, Mat. 6, and used a form, John 17; Mat. 26. 44, and so did the Apostles, Acts 4, 24. Strange it is you should be against forms, when you have so many Scripture rules and examples for it! Your only pretence is, that you pray with the spirit, 1 Cor. 14, 5, which you vainly pretend is praying extempore, as tho' the spirit dictated the very words and phrases, or at least the matter of your prayers. But if this be the meaning of it, you must by the same rule sing extempore also, and it will be as much stinting the spirit to sing the psalms, which are forms, as to use forms in prayer. And indeed if your prayers were thus inspired as you pretend, I don't see why they should not be equal to canonical Scripture: but I believe if you could see many of them written out word for word afterwards, you would be ashamed to pretend they were inspired.

7. Another thing wherein you appear to me to vary from the ancient examples and precedents in holy Scriptures, is, that the people do not bear a part in your public worship. Indeed this is what many of you are prejudiced against, because you think it is confusion. But let me assure you, that this is merely because you are not accustomed to such a method, which if you were, experience would soon convince you, as it does us, that it would be so far from being confusion, that it would appear the most awakening, enlivening and every way the most edifying way. But I should hope that it would take off this prejudice, if you would consider that it was the ancient Scripture method of worship. Thus the Apostles and primitive Christians "lift up the voice with one accord," Acts 4, 24, all joining in one form. And the apostle requires, Rom. 15, 6, that we should with one mind and one mouth glorify our Heavenly Father. And the Church in Rev. 19, 6, are represented as all praising God together, so that their voice was like the noise of many waters, which implies not their singing but speaking together: and St. Paul requires not only that we should sing psalms, but also that we speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, Eph. 5, 19.

8. I think I have just reason to except against you in that you do not kneel in your prayers and other services, which is directly contrary to what is required, Ps. 95, 6, "let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." And to the example of the apostle, who "kneeled down and prayed with them all," Acts 20, 36. You pretend that bodily exercise profiteth little, and that we should worship God in spirit and truth, which, it is true, is of the greatest importance; but thence to depreciate or exclude bodily worship is directly contrary to the apostle, who tells us, that since we are (in body as well as spirit) bought with a price, we should therefore glorify God with our bodies, as well as our spirits, which are his, 1 Cor. 6, 20. You except against our bowing at the name of Jesus, which it is strange you should do, when it is expressly said, at the name of Jesus let every knee bow, Phil. 2, 10, which, if it is not to be understood as an express command of what we practice, is, I think at least, sufficient to justify the lawfulness of it, and none methinks but an Arian or Socinian could find fault with it. You also except against kneeling at the Sacrament: but, pray, why should you when this is the most solemn act of worship that we can perform; and I have before shown that kneeling is the proper and Scripture posture of wor-

ship. You reply, our savior and his apostles did not kneel. I answer, it does not certainly appear what posture they used; but be sure it was not sitting, for the table gesture then was leaning; if therefore you are bound by his example precisely, you must lean on one another. But, supposing the table posture was then admitted, is not the case now much altered from what it was then? Does it follow, because he admitted his apostles to sit with him then, when he appeared in the form of a servant, that therefore we should not now use the posture of adoration on that occasion, since all power in heaven and earth is given unto him, Mat. 28, 18. And he is made the Lord of angels, who are commanded to worship him, Heb. 1, 6. How scandalously indecent is it to receive this seal of our pardon sitting? And is it not much more becoming us to perform this most solemn act of worship in the ancient adoring posture?

9. I can't but think it a wrong thing, that the laity among you are not only forbid bearing a vocal part in your service, but are not allowed even so much as to say *Amen* audibly in your worship, at the end of the prayers and other services: whereas God requireth this, and it was the practice of the church of old, both Jewish and Christian, as will evidently appear to you if you will look into Deut. 27, 15. Ps. 106, 48, 1 Chron. 16, 36, 1 Cor. 14, 16, Rev. 5, 4.

10. I will add lastly, as to doctrinal points, that you seem to me guilty of a very great error, in teaching your children, "that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." For seeing sin has come to pass, it is plain, that you do herein teach them, that God has ordained, that is, willed sin, and consequently approves it; which yet we are sure he abhors, Heb. 1, 13, and therefore could not decree it. And you teach also, that God has absolutely decreed the eternal death and destruction of the greatest part of mankind; for this I take to be the true sense of your confession of faith. Whereas he hath declared with an oath that he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, Ezek. 33, 11, and therefore he could not absolutely decree it, for he can't but have pleasure in his own decree.

Many things might be offered further under each head, but I will add no more at present. These I hope will be sufficient, if duly considered, both to make you sensible how much reason we have, not for want of charity, but purely in point of conscience, to scruple the lawfulness of your communion, and that it is your duty to lay aside

your prejudices, and come over to ours. At least I hope you will be convinced how injurious your teachers are, in representing the ministers of the Church as grievous wolves, and false brethren, as they lately did deliberately, being convened in council. They could not, sure, in this, be governed by the spirit of the Gospel, which is all truth, charity, meekness and moderation. This is the spirit of Christ, with which such a censorious, malevolent and uncharitable spirit is certainly inconsistent, which therefore I hope you will lay aside, considering, that they which have not the spirit of Christ, are none of his, Rom. 8, 9.

To conclude therefore, let me beseech you in the spirit of meekness, to give these things an unbiased, candid and serious consideration; and let nothing but a pure disinterested love of truth and right influence you in examining the weight and importance of them. For if you receive not the love of the truth, and do not enquire after it, and embrace it, purely for its own sake, but are governed only by vogue, custom, fashion and worldly considerations, and for the sake of them hold fast deceit, and refuse to let it go, or (which in effect is the same thing) if you lazily or negligently sit down, in a careless inconsiderateness about it, you may provoke God to send you strong delusions, and leave you under the power of them, to run on into endless mazes of contention and confusion.

Be not therefore afraid or any account unwilling to acquaint yourselves with the Church, and examine the matter fairly on both sides. This can do you no harm, and may do you a great deal of good. For if upon a fair and impartial examination on both sides you find, that, according to the best of your judgment, the truth is on the dissenting side, you will then be reasonable, and at least you would learn to be charitable dissenters, and consequently be the more acceptable in continuing as you are. But if you should find (as I doubt not but you will; for the Church is not afraid, nay is glad, to stand the test of a serious, honest and impartial examination; I say, if you should find) that the truth is on the side of the Church, you will not repent of your inquiry. For I conclude, certainly, if you are persons of honesty and seriousness, you would rather be on the side of the Church, than not be on the side of truth. For to be deceived or in an error, in any case, is to be in a wretched and unnatural condition. And if you would thus uprightly enquire, and be thus impartially determined, you would then act the part

of reasonable creatures, and perform an acceptable because a reasonable service, and be able to render to every one a reason of the hope that is in you, and which is yet of infinitely greater importance, you would then be able at last to give the better account of your selves to God. And certainly, if, having an opportunity to enquire and inform your selves, to examine and judge for your selves, you neglect it, and will not put your selves into the way of being impartially instructed, but shut your eyes against the light, you can't but have much to answer for, and which I don't see how you can give an account of; whereas, if you would thus honestly and seriously inquire after the truth, with a studious and conscientious endeavor to find it, that you may be practically governed by it, you would not fail, by God's blessing, to find it, and be led by it in the way of peace and holiness, through faith, unto salvation, which is the earnest prayer, and shall be the hearty endeavor of

Your sincere Friend,
and Wellwisher

A / Second LETTER / From / a Minister of the Church / of / ENGLAND / To his / Dissenting Parishioners, / In Answer to / Some Remarks made on the former, / by one J. G. / Prov. xxvi. 18. As a madman who casteth Fire-brands, / Arrows and Death, so is the Man that deceiveth his / Neighbor, and saith, am not I in sport. / Psal. cxx. 7. I am for Peace, but when I speak, they are / for War. / BOSTON: / Printed in the Year 1734. /

A SECOND LETTER

From a Minister of the Church of England to his dissenting parishioners, in defense of the former, etc.

Dear Brethren,

My writing my former letter to take off the aspersions, which have been injuriously cast upon the church, was principally occasioned by this very J. G. who, without any manner of provocation, had (as some of his friends have owned) written a scurrilous paper of verses, which did most abominably misrepresent, and abuse the Church, and tend to beget in people a very wrong notion of it, and a bitter uncharitable temper towards it. And now, in spite of all the caution and tenderness wherewith I endeavored to conduct my self, both in my conversation, and letter, is still resolved to go on reproaching and misrepresenting us, and setting us in all the odious and ridiculous lights he can invent. For my part, I sincerely aimed at reconciling the difference between you and us, and composing our spirits as far as I was able, that if possible we might come at a right understanding of each other, and a good agreement; or at least, if we could not attain to think alike, that we might not think hardly, censoriously or injuriously of each other, and might live in tolerable good peace and charity one with another. But this man is resolved to set, and keep us still at a variance, and to blow up the fire of contention and uncharitableness, and all forsooth, under the pretense of doing justice tho' you will find by what follows, that his remarks are in truth one continued piece of injustice.

As to my self, I regard not his reproaches: let him rail and try to

expose and vilify me as much as he pleases; his wrath is impotent, and cannot hurt me: I do heartily forgive him, and pray God give him repentance and forgiveness! And as to his reproachful and abusive treatment of the Church, I will only say, the Lord rebuke thee. I assure you that as I am not disposed, on so serious a subject, to be either angry or merry; so I shall not go into such a method in defending our cause: I have not so learned Christ. The Church of England does not need such a furious, scolding, delusive management, in defending her. She has stood the test of time, of fire and faggot, of civil rage and tumult, of popish tyranny and enthusiastic anarchy, and is not to be looked out of countenance at this time of day, by the bold insults, and brazen effrontery of little impertinent adversaries. God has abundantly assured the world that the Church of England, which has ever been allowed to be the bulwark of the Reformation, is dear to Him, by delivering her in six troubles, and in seven, by a series of remarkable, (I had almost said) miraculous providences, and having delivered us so often, and from so great deaths, we trust in Him that He will yet deliver us. The "wrath of man shall praise thee, O Lord, and the remainder thereof shall thou restrain!"

I am indeed sorry, for the poor man's sake that he suffers himself to be so much out of temper and without any provocation; that he should show himself so little of the gentleman, or the Christian; that he should betray so much ill breeding, as well as ill temper, as he does by so much base language, and such odious insinuations. However, the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, and I doubt not but He will over-rule all this wrathful treatment of us in such a manner as to make it turn to our advantage; as it is, on the other hand a great disgrace to your cause, that it should be defended in such a scurrilous manner, insomuch that most of the sober, serious and thinking people among your selves have often declared themselves ashamed of it, and even your ministers will not venture to offer a syllable in defence of it.

It is indeed unaccountable to many considerate and moderate-spirited people of both persuasions, what can be the occasion of it, that this man, and some others like him, should discover such a bitter spirit against the Church of England in the country, and raise such an hideous outcry, as if it were the greatest judgment that ever befell it? What can tempt them to make such dolorous

lamentations, as tho' our church was the most heretical, corrupt and abominable communion in the world? How can it be such a dreadful grief to them, as tho' we brought another religion, or another Gospel among you which you have not received? Whereas it is not so, my brethren, we have the same religion, the same Gospel, and the same hope with you; only we think in some things you are mistaken, and that you are in the wrong in being on the side of those that separate from so excellent a church as ours is. These men do therefore fright themselves and you with mere shadows, and they know best what ends they would serve in so doing. But do not, I beseech you, suffer your selves to be frighted or exasperated by their hard speeches: we have no design or desire to break in upon your liberty, or impose upon you; nay, we do not desire you to conform to our church any farther than you see good reason for it: only we would wish you to exercise your reason and consider things candidly and impartially, and not be governed by passion or prejudice, nor be put out of humor by empty noise or confident nonsense.

I own, and bless God for it, the generality of your ministers are men of a better spirit, and will not run into the same excess of riot with this stranger in speaking evil of us; and many of them I know to be sensible and ingenious men, and of a good Christian catholic spirit, with whom I do, and shall converse, with the same freedom, friendship and good-will, as with any of my brethren of the Church; and I do aver that no difference in opinion ever did, or shall alienate my affections from any of them. And I can't but wonder, that they would suffer such a mess of Billingsgate-scolding to be printed, or that they can any of them stomach to vend it about among their people. I am sure they hurt themselves by it, and I am sorry for them, and for you, that you are in danger of being imposed upon by it, tho' I cannot think it will eventually hurt the Church. It breathes nothing of the English spirit; it is all over outlandish. Had I had any of your own writers to deal with, I should hope to have been treated in a more gentleman-like, and Christian manner; however, I have not found my self disposed to be put out of humor by it, and I can assure you, that all the passion it ever raised in me, is that of pity for him, that he should be so unhappily enslaved to his own passions and prejudice.

The only instance wherein he can have any face to pretend that

I expressed my self harshly is (as he will have it) that I called your teacher a blind guide, and then launches out in a great commendation of him, which, I assure you, I don't envy him; I rather wish for his sake it had been given him by a person of a more established reputation, that it might have been a credit to him. But he is very wrong to represent me as calling him, in particular, a blind guide: all that I did was to exhort you in our Savior's words to consider the danger there is, lest, if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch, *i. e.*, into error, which certainly is the case of those, be they who they will, who lead, and are led into such a wrong and bitter notion of the Church of England, and such an uncharitable temper towards it. But I applied it to nobody: let them take it to whom it belongs. That there are blind or ignorant guides in all communions, none will deny, and it was our Savior's intention (and that, and that only, was mine) to exhort the people to be upon their guard, to look out carefully and see with their own eyes, and not to pin their faith upon any man's sleeve, nor be blindly led on into error by ignorant and designing men, be they who they will. This was all that I did, and pray where was the crime of it?

I wish your teachers were, some of them, more studious, and more knowing than they are; and it would be well for them and you too, if (as some of them do) they would all read the excellent writers of our church. For I find that those of your preachers that are most acquainted with our divines, are the most admired by your selves, and that the more knowing any of them or their people are, the better tempered they are towards the church; and you may depend upon it, that in proportion as true knowledge increases in the country, a veneration for the Church of England will increase, and that the most bitter and censorious will ever be found the most ignorant.

But to come a little nearer to our controvertist: I will first make two or three general remarks on his unfair management in this controversy. One is, that he would seem to defend the constitution of the churches of this country, and you are apt to take it, that it is your cause he is pleading, whereas it is the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland, that he really has at heart, and aims at, at the bottom; and the truth is, he drives as really at an innovation in the country, as I can be supposed to do. It is not the cause of the congregational principles of this country that he is after, but what he calls the

glorious Zenith of Presbytery, p. 16, and to gild over his design the better, he calls you Presbyterians, and speaks as tho' Presbyterianism was established in these governments, p. 2, whereas every body that knows any thing of the matter, must know, that the principles and practices of this country are, in many things, very remote from Presbyterianism. It is well known that the generality of our fore-fathers were Independents or Brownists, and he himself owns, p. 12, that he has as much aversion to Brownism as to Prelacy. He dislikes your church-government, and owns your relations and church-covenants, p. 28, and your not reading the Scriptures to be errors, p. 35. So that he is really an enemy to the cause he would be tho't to defend.

In the next place, he is very unfair in observing so often, and making such a triumph of it, that I say some things without proving of them, when he knows that I never aimed nor pretended to prove every thing in the compass of two or three sheets of paper, and that it was one design of my letter to invite you as lovers of truth and fair inquirers, to give me opportunity in conversation to prove several things that I did not pretend to prove in so little a compass: and yet this mean artifice is used to represent as tho', I had proved nothing at all: tho' you will find by what follows, that there were many things, and those the most important, which I did prove, and he has not, to several of them, so much as attempted an answer.

Lastly, when I express my dislike of the temper of some of your teachers towards the Church, and especially their scattering abroad several books, which set it in a very false and odious light, he is very injurious in representing me, p. 15, etc., as tho' I condemned them all in a lump, as so many seducers, deluders, enemies of God, crucifiers of Christ, and I know not what: I am sure there is nothing in my letter that can be justly interpreted to bear such a meaning. No, I know very well that there are not very many of them (and I am sorry for him that he has given so much proof that he is one), who are of that bitter, injurious spirit that I tho't it my duty to bear testimony against. But tho' some of your ministers, as he says, do treat me with all civility and candor (and I am sure I never have been wanting in my returns, as he very well knows) he is resolved to be none of that number; he is engaged to blacken me, tho' it be at the expense of known truth and common justice: he charges me with repeated railings against them, both from the

press and pulpit, p. 15. Now as to this, I may say, God is my witness, and you also, that it is a most notorious falsity. And I appeal to you all that ever knew or heard me, if I have ever said or written any that could be justly called railing, or any thing like it.

And now to begin with this pamphlet, and take things in course. The first thing he objects against me is, that I call you dissenters, and my parishioners; and he will have it that we of the Church rather are dissenters in this country, where he says the Presbyterians are the established church, p. 2. To all which I answer thus, that you are my Parishioners, is as true, as it is that I am appointed minister of this town and the places adjacent, by the Honorable Society incorporated by Royal Charter for providing ministers for the plantations, and by the bishop of London to whom the ecclesiastical government of them is committed by the supreme authority of our nation: and for this I can produce my instructions. That you are dissenters is as true as it is that you dissent from our church and do not conform to it, as I have proved it your duty to do. That the Church in this country are not dissenters, in his sense of the word, is as evident, as it is false, which he says, that the Presbyterians are the established church here: and that neither they, nor any other persuasion contrary to the Church of England, are established in this country, is evident from the Lord's Justices Letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Boston, in the year 1725, which declares, that there is no regular establishment of any national or provincial church in these plantations, nor can there be any without His Majesty's consent, and that it would be a contempt of his Royal Prerogative for the legislature here to undertake to make an establishment without Him, etc.

He seems angry, p. 3, that I call you brethren. What a strange man is this? he is neither pleased, full nor fasting. If I did not call you so, then he would exclaim against me as uncharitable; and if I do call you so, then I am inconsistent with my self. If the church should declare a formal sentence of excommunication against you, then he would say she is tyrannical; and if she be so tender as not to declare such a sentence against those that do, *ipso facto, i. e.*, materially or in fact excommunicate themselves, and is so kind as still to call them her brethren (as the fact is so, and we have always done) then, forsooth, we must be faulted for not treating you as heathen and publicans; tho' in that case, according to St. Paul, 2

Thes. 2, 15, we should not count you as enemies, but admonish you as brethren. How shall we contrive to please this sour-tempered gentleman? However, whether he be pleased or displeased, I will go on, upon the score of our common Christianity, to call you, my brethren, tho' you are on the side of a separation from the Church; and the rather because, I don't consider you as being so much to blame for it, as such furious men as this J. G. who try to keep you as much at odds with us as possible; upon which account you are rather to be pitied than severely treated.

Nay, he seems displeased that I pray for you, and flouts at me that I pray without book; as tho' the church allowed of no prayers to be used, even in private, or any particular occasion, besides the public prayers; tho' he knows, or might know, that she prescribes no forms for private use, but leaves the people to use what method they please, and even allows the minister to express the prayer in public, before the sermon, as he thinks fit. And if he had read our public prayers over so carefully as he pretends, he might have found that we do constantly pray, that God would bring into the way of truth, all such as have erred and are deceived, in which we pray for you; and moreover, that we pray for all our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, in which we pray for him: and God forbid that I should cease to pray for you, or him either.

He says, p. 4, that he must use plainness of speech, and tell me, that it is a most notorious falsehood, when I say that great pains are taken to fright you from coming within the doors of the church, when he knows I meant the Church of England. Now that this is true, I appeal to your own knowledge, and to his bitter writings, full of dolorous outcries against the Church. He exhorts me to take heed how I seduce and deceive poor souls, etc. This I have always done, and by the Grace of God, I hope shall do, very conscientiously: and I wish he had been careful to act up to his own exhortation: I am sure he greatly endangers them by trying to inspire them with such bitterness and rancor towards their Christian brethren, so much the reverse of the temper of the Gospel.

He says, p. 5, it can be nothing but an ambitious spirit of usurpation that makes me find fault with people's not coming to me, when I only desire that they would be so candid, and so much lovers of truth and right, as to examine things impartially, and when they hear the Church decried and derided, to come and give me oppor-

tunity to vindicate it, and see with their own eyes, whether it be that odious thing it is represented to be; to try all things, that they may know, and hold fast that which is good, 1 Thes. 5, 21. Now why must this be uncharitably styled a spirit of ambitous usurpation? Why may it not be from a love of truth, and an earnest desire that it may not suffer from a spirit of party and prejudice? As I do sincerely declare that it is.

However, to antidote you against coming to the church, which is solemnly dedicated to the worship of God, he contemptuously and impiously calls it a little cage under the hill. Much like a gentleman! And like a Christian! This I suppose he takes to be very pretty, thus to sport himself with sacred things. Is this the man that writes himself a minister of the Word of God (for that is the meaning of those mystical letters, V. D. M.)? With what face can he pretend to be a minister of the gospel of peace and reconciliation that shall use such language as this to stir up a spirit of hatred, contempt and ill-will among Christians?

He says, p. 6, I tell you you are brutishly ignorant of the way of salvation. Now where have I used any such expression, or any thing like it? Have I not said the contrary? How abominably false and injurious is this? I do indeed maintain, that your unacquaintedness with the Church of England is the main, and I would hope the only, reason of your aversion to it: and I must say, and am well assured of it, that the Christian religion is more clearly and intelligibily taught in the Church of England, than it is among you: but is this to say, you are brutisly ignorant of it? God forbid!

In p. 7, also you have a most gross instance of unfair and unrighteous dealing. He would persuade you that we have no Godly discipline: and that the church herself owns it, and quotes a passage in the Liturgy for it: but how unfairly does he act? He sets down the beginning of a sentence, and leaves out what should explain it. What can this be, if it be not a wilful design to delude you? I will give the whole sentence that you may see what the truth of the case is. "Brethren there was in the primitive church a Godly discipline that at the beginning of Lent such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance." This particular instance of ancient discipline, that notorious offenders should do open penance on the first of Lent, we own we have not, and wish it restored. But is this to own we have no Godly discipline at

all, because we don't use this good ancient custom? I say again, God forbid! If open penance is not done on the first of Lent, as it was in the ancient church, it does not follow that it is never done at all. And if he had not been resolved to blacken us at any rate, right or wrong, and at the expense of both truth and justice, he would not have concealed the express order of the church at the beginning of our Communion Office, where the minister is strictly required "to forbid any open and notorious evil-liver, presuming to come to the Lord's Table, till he openly declare himself to have truly repented and amended his naughty life." etc. And what this open penance is, you may see in the *Present State of Great Britain*, p. 190. "The Delinquent is to stand in the church porch, on some Sunday barehead and barefoot, bewailing himself, and begging every one that passes by, to pray for him: then to enter the church, and in the middle of the church he is placed over against the minister, who declares the foulness of his crime, odious to God and scandalous to the congregation," but if he is obstinately impenitent, the dreadful sentence of excommunication is denounced against him. Now is not this a Godly discipline? What would this man have? If indeed, there be too great a relaxation of discipline in the church, we may thank the separation for it, which has been a refuge for the obstinate and perverse, whereby the church's authority has been grievously weakened.

As to the government of our church he says, you have unanswered and unanswerable arguments against us extant. Now this I deny to be true, and do assure you that I know him to be very ignorant of the best writers on our side; and therefore no wonder he should talk at this rate, and that you have no arguments gainst us but what have been answered over and over again. On the other hand, we have sundry authors that never were so much as attempted to be answered, such as Hooker, Potter, *The Original Draught of the Primitive Church*, *The London Cases*, etc. He calls me, p. 8, to show what there is on your side nearer akin to popery, than any thing in the church: because he is so importunate, I will here mention one thing, and that is, that bishops and presbyters are of the same order. This is the main foundation principle of Presbyterianism, and this was also strenuously contended for by the managers of the Court of Rome, as any one may see in F. Paul's *History of the Council of Trent*. Some other instances I shall mention afterwards.

As to what he says here of the Apocrypha, holy days, the sign of the cross and kneeling, it shall be considered afterwards. And as to what he says, p. 9. and 10. of the lordly superiority of bishops and their swearing obedience to arch-bishops: I answer, it is very injurious for him to represent them as so many arbitrary tyrants, when he knows, they can require nothing but what is according to law: and where is the harm of swearing to be obedient to lawful authority "in all things lawful and honest," which are the words of the oath as expressed in our licences. But he would represent as tho' it were a blind implicit obedience that is required, which is a thing the church knows nothing of, but has ever declared her utmost abhorrence of it. And here, how wickedly does he insinuate that the Archbishop of Canterbury is as bad as the Pope of Rome? He is but another Pope! Not a penny to choose between them! What can this be, if it be not a formed design to impose upon you? And to operate the more pleasingly on your credulity, he insinuates it with a similitude of a cat and a mouse catcher, and laughs, and thinks he is wondrous witty: poor man! As if a cat catched nothing but mice, and nothing catched mice but a cat: what poor despicable childish stuff is this? I wonder he could not have thought, on this occasion, of a weasel, or of a sort of owl that catches mice: so difficult a thing is it for some people to look at home! No, he says they are the same, and so is the Pope and Archbishop! Now, how intolerably abusive is this, when he knows well enough that the Pope claims an infallibility and absolute supremacy over all the bishops in the world; whereas the Archbishop of Canterbury, is but the first among his equals, and no more to the rest, than a fore-man to a jury, or a moderator to a town-meeting.

Here he would have you believe too, that however wicked a man is, we declare, in the Burial Office, that we have a good hope he is gone straight to Heaven: I must still say, such false insinuations are very wicked. We do indeed declare our hopes in that office, but not however wicked a man has been: for I know not that we are obliged to use that Office over one that there is no hopes of.

He falsely pretends because I mentioned Delaune's name but once, that this is all you hear of Delaune's arguments, when I pretended to answer the most material objections in that book. Now as to this I still say, that I answered the most material objections in his book, tho' I mentioned his name but once: and where I did mention his name, I answered the main objection he has, and

indeed that which runs thro' the whole book, weak as it is, as this man owns, *viz.* that of our symbolizing with popery, and showed that it concludes as strongly against you as against us.

In the next three pages you have a long harrangue about persecution. To which I have these things to say: In the first place, that what he calls persecution, I still maintain, was the doings of the state, and not of the church; and this is as evident as it is that they are entirely distinct governments. Do any of the Church's laws threaten fines, imprisonment or death to those that break them? No: how then can she be charged with inflicting them? Why, he says, because some of the Ecclesiastics were of the Legislature. Well, be that as it will, this don't prove that they either made those laws, or executed them, especially as Ecclesiastics. But suppose they did: I don't pretend to say, there never was a Churchman of a persecuting spirit. If there have been such, they must answer for it: I am not concerned to defend them, but the church: and I challenge him to show one principle or tenet of the church that implies or justifies persecution; for the church is the same now there is no persecution as when there was, and yet the divine right of Diocesan Episcopacy still is, as it always was, a doctrine of our church.

And secondly, neither did the civil government of England, except in popish times, ever shed a drop of any man's blood on account of religion, which was the expression I used. Nor do I, as he says, represent the Presbyterians as seditious incendiaries, unless he will own they were those that were guilty of seditious practices under a pretense of zeal for religion. Indeed most of the bitter things he instances in were what the Dissenters suffered in the latter part of King Charles II's reign and under King James II. when it is very well known, that not the church but popery was at the bottom, and the church at last was persecuted as well as the Dissenters.

I tell you in my letter, p. 7, that you are most unreasonable in talking of persecution now, when you have almost 50 years enjoyed an uninterrupted toleration. To this he says, he is sorry I can't reckon back as far as 1688. Why really I fancy if he could reckon so far back he would find it almost 50 years. And with what propriety could King James be said to interrupt the toleration, when he was the King that first granted it? And that, the year before;

and the Presbyterians were vastly lavish of their compliments in thanking him, tho' they knew it was designed for the sake of bringing in popery.

As to the days of Oliver Cromwell, when the Dissenters were uppermost, tho' the Brownists or Independents were his greatest favorites, as he pleads, yet the Presbyterians were also supported by him in opposition to the Church. And tho' I believe they generally abhorred the murder of the king, yet they barbarously deprived him of his chaplains, and denied him the liberty of the Common-Prayer, and had a great hand in the management of those times, when as I say, the Church was suppressed, and her clergy sequestered, plundered and barbarously treated; and for this I appeal to Walker's *History of the Sufferings of Our Church and Clergy* in those times of rebellion and confusion. But I would ask him, did not things go as the Presbyterians would have them when the Directory was established, and before Oliver got into the saddle? Now the same Act of Parliament that establishes the Presbyterian Directory made by the Assembly of Divines, did enact, that "If any person or persons whatsoever, shall at any time or times hereafter use the Book of Common Prayer, in any church, chapel or public place of worship, or in any private place or family, etc. that then every such person so offending shall for the first offence forfeit and pay the sum of five pounds, and for the second offence the sum of ten pounds, and for the third, shall suffer one whole year's imprisonment, without bail or mainprize." These are the very words of the Act of that Presbyterian Parliament, and yet he has the assurance to ask, will you charge these things on the Presbyterians? And in Scotland I still maintain that the Presbyterians did, not only, as he says, repossess themselves of what they had been deprived of, but did, moreover "frequently disturb and interrupt the Episcopal clergy in their religious assemblies, and prosecute them for using the English Service in the congregations, and administering the Sacraments according to the form and manner prescribed in the Church of England, till Queen Anne and her Parliament found it necessary to make an act of toleration for the Episcopal Church there." These are words of *The Present State of Great Britain*, p. 281. See also *Letters of Toleration against Meldrum*. I do therefore still say that no Dissenters of any denomination can with any face of modesty object persecution against us,

when they in their turns have persecuted us as much as ever they can pretend they were persecuted. Tho' I do abhor and condemn it equally on both sides and wherever it is found.

After he has pretended to set the case of Scotland in a clear light (tho' I can see no light in it), he says boldly and roundly, that no part of Christ's mystical body ever drank deeper of the cup of persecution, than the Presbyterian Church there did from the hands of Protestant prelates. What a prodigious assertion is this? What can I make of it? I am loth to charge him with a design to say a notorious untruth, I had rather think him beside himself, or grossly ignorant, if I could any way help him out. Did he never read any thing of the ten bloody persecutions of the primitive church? Or does he know nothing of the innumerable butcheries of Protestants from the tyranny of the Church of Rome? Need I say how vastly more, even beyond comparison, they suffered in 4 years under Queen Mary's reign in England, than these people in the whole 28 years he speaks of in Scotland? Nay I may appeal to Walker's history above mentioned, compared with Bishop Burnet, that the Church of England and her clergy suffered, at least as much in 12 years in the time of the rebellion. What does the man mean in giving himself such unaccountable liberties? I am not concerned to vindicate Archbishop Sharp; but with what face can he mention him, when he knows that he was barbarously murdered by Presbyterians? He ought rather in tenderness to his own cause to be ashamed to revive the memory of that bloody deed.

As to lampoons, I dislike them on both sides: but with what justice he or others can complain I cannot see, when he knows they begun with their *Catholic Remedy*, and their *Important Questions* as he calls them. I will venture to tell you one of his very important questions. It was this; after a very false and odious description of the Church of England, in a sort of barbarous rhymes, he asks, "Are these Christ's Church, pray, or ben't they the Devils." Does he think such questions deserve serious answers? Or, if he does, can he or any mortal blame me; who (without returning railing for railing, or one lampoon for another) have tho't it my duty, seriously to endeavor to vindicate the church, in a country where she is so barbarously misrepresented and abused?

We are now come to that point, whether the martyrs in Queen Mary's days were Prebyterians? Now I can produce living testimony that such things have been pretended, however this he gives

up, and allows that whoever said so ought to be made ashamed of it. But yet he thinks they would have been for bringing the Reformation forward to Presbytery, if they had lived a little longer, p. 16. No, no, they were not such weak people or so ignorant of the Scriptures or the state of the primitive church as to be likely afterwards to alter their judgments, or think Presbytery preferable to Episcopacy. They knew what they did, and having the civil government with them in their proceedings, they had opportunity to go on leisurely, and to consider things with care and accuracy, and to set down their foot very warily. It has indeed been often pretended, merely from some unguarded expressions of private men, that our first reformers held Episcopacy to be only *jure humano*, *i. e.*, of human appointment. But with what justice can this be pretended when they deliberately and publicly declare in the preface to the Ordination Office that: "It is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' times there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church, bishops, priests and deacons, which were ever held in such reverend estimation, that no man by his own private authority, might presume to execute them, except he were first tried, examined and approved, and with public prayer and imposition of hands admitted thereto."

I say, those holy martyrs were the very men that compiled our forms of prayer. In answer to his, he asks, what did our church do for forms before their day? and would insinuate, that before this they prayed without book, and so in this regard were Presbyterians, p. 16. What wretched quibbling and unfair delusive dealing is this? when he and every body knows, that before their days popery was the established religion in England. What they aimed at, and declared to be their design, was to purge the church of all popish innovations, and restore it as near as possible to the primitive model, as it stood before the days of popery; and the forms they prescribed were such, and many of them the very same, as were used in the church, within the three or four first centuries, as Dr. Comber, and Mr. Bingham plainly make appear: and for these their proceedings and their stedfast adhering to them, in opposition to the Church of Rome, it was that they burnt at the stake, and not merely for such things as we hold in common with you, as he insinuates.

He still insists upon it, that, tho' we use the service of the church,

we are no true churchmen; and will have it that we are Arminians, and a deal of pains he takes upon this point, pages 17, 20, 29, and says, p. 42, tho' I hate the name of that Dutch Presbyterian, yet I am a man after his own heart. To all which, I answer, first, tho' I am none of his disciples, yet I don't hate him. Nay, I will own, that I have a much better opinion of this Dutch Presbyterian, than I have of some Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, and don't deny but that we hold some doctrines in common with him. Where he follows Christ and his apostles, I am content to follow him; but I am far from following him in every thing; and therefore it is unfair and unjust for him to endeavor to render me odious by calling me an Arminian. He would think me very unjust if I should call him a Mahometan, because he holds some doctrines that Mahomet taught; and yet this he certainly does; for it is well known that the doctrine of absolute predestination which he holds, was one of the fundamental principles of Mahometanism: but just so unfair is he in calling me an Arminian.

Secondly, whereas he says, you hold this doctrine just as we do: this I deny; and leave it to any body to compare your confession, and his pretended explication of it in p. 43, with our article. You can indeed consistently own our article, but we cannot consistently own your confession, because it peremptorily determines in this controversy, which ours does not, for there is not a syllable in it of absolute reprobation, which is the grand point that we scruple. And herein the wisdom and goodness of our church was very conspicuous, in so treating of this doctrine, as not to give offence to persons of either persuasion. For,

Thirdly, I appeal to Dr. Heylin's history of this controversy, and Bishop Burnet on the 39 articles, (and I here mention it once for all, that when I quote authors to save the trouble of writing, if any persons want to be further satisfied, and desire it I will lend them the books I refer to) I say I appeal to those authors, that our first reformers did not aim at expressing Calvin's sense; but designedly went in the middle way of Erasmus, Melancthon and the Augsburg or Lutheran confession. And those who were rigid Calvinists afterwards were so sensible of this, that they were not contented with our articles, and would have had the Lambeth articles (as they are called) established, which strongly express the Calvinistic sense. Now if our articles, were full on that side, what need they have troubled themselves to bring in any other?

See especially Dr. Heylin, who abundantly vindicates our church from the imputation of Calvinism. I would observe,

Fourthly, that it is not a just and fair way to judge of the sense of the church by any single phrase or expression taken by itself alone (especially since so accurate a way of speaking and writing on controversial subjects had not then obtained in our language, nor in those times, as it has since); but the right way of ascertaining the Church's sense, is to take the whole of it together, and compare the several passages in the articles, liturgy and homilies on a subject one with another, which you may see done by Dr. Heylin in a multitude of instances. I will mention two or three. Thus in the prayers we use such expressions as these, "Almighty God who hast compassion on all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, and wouldest not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live." And in the Catechism we teach, "That Christ hath redeemed us and all mankind." And indeed the 17th article explains itself, if he had fairly given you the whole of it; for after what he recites, these words follow, "Furthermore we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture, and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the Word of God." Now in the Word of God it is expressly declared, that Christ died for all," 2 Cor. 5. 14; that "he tasted death for every man," Heb. 2. 9; that he bought or redeemed, even those who notwithstanding by denying him brought on themselves swift destruction, 2 Pet. 2. 1, and that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and be saved," 2 Pet. 3. 9. and 1 Tim. 2. 4, 5, 6. I would ask now, how it can be supposed to be the sense of our church; that Christ died only for here and there one, and that God hath absolutely decreed or willed the eternal misery and destruction of all the rest of mankind. No, I am sure if we take the articles, prayers and homilies altogether, and candidly interpret one passage by another, and by the general tenor of the whole, we shall find nothing in them that can be justly interpreted to express the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute predestination and reprobation: and let the articles be so understood, as in candor and justice they ought, and there is not one of them, but I do heartily own and assent to. And besides,

Fifthly, who, I beseech you, can be supposed so well to have understood the Church's sense in her articles, as those very men that

composed them? Now it is certain that they taught exactly as we do now, and that long before Arminius was heard of; I might instance in several of them, but for brevity, I will only quote a passage out of each of those three good martyrs, Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Latimer, and Bishop Hooper, which you may see in Bishop Fowler's Discourse on *Christian Liberty*, and many more in Dr. Heylin. Archbishop Cranmer says, that "Christ made a sacrifice and oblation of his body on the cross, which was a full redemption, satisfaction and propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Which are also very near the same words that our church uses in her communion Service. Bishop Latimer says, that "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter; Peter believed it, and therefore was saved, Judas would not believe, and therefore was condemned; the fault being in him only and in no body else, etc. And Bishop Hooper says, "Judas was no more excluded from the promise of Christ than Peter; Esau than Jacob, concerning which two brethren in the sentence given to Rebecca, there was no mention at all that Esau should be disinherited of eternal life, but that he should be inferior to his brother Jacob in this world, which prophecy was fulfilled in their posterity, and not in the persons themselves: God is said to have hated Esau, not because he was disinherited of eternal life, but in laying his mountains and heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness, Mal. 1. 3." Thus they interpreted the 9th of Rom. then, just as we do now, and as the Church always did from the beginning in its best and purest ages, when they had no notion of any absolute personal decrees.

And lastly, I observe, that according to the doctrine of our church, her articles are to be interpreted according to the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures by our articles, or those of any other church; and for this I have the authority of the Church herself, who declares in Art. VI, that "The H. Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man to be believed as an article of the faith, or be tho't requisite or necessary to salvation." Now I am well assured, that the Scriptures nowhere teach this man's notion of predestination, and therefore neither does our church. And according to this article, I am free to declare, and am glad he has put me upon it, p. 30, that I do from the bottom of my heart hold the H. Scriptures to be my only, perfect, complete and unerring rule in the pursuit of salvation: nor do

I in the least think that this declaration will at all rub hard on any of the Church's articles, nor ceremonies neither, as he surmises, because I know, and am sure, that the Scriptures teach all the doctrines of our church, and justify her in the injunction of all her ceremonies, and oblige us to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace in the observance of them, Eph. 4. 3.

But if this be his notion of the Scripture, what an unaccountable man is he, p. 20, to question my soundness in the doctrine of regeneration, or whether I hold the necessity of it, because I express it in Scripture phrases, and don't hold his unscriptural notion of predestination? Is it because he is resolved to represent me as an heretic in spite of reason and Scripture, and every thing I can say or do? I assure you, I must think my self much safer while I speak of these things in the language of the H. Ghost, than in his unscriptural unintelligible phrases. And I do still say, that it vastly recommends the Church of England to me, as it ought to all good Christians, that all her public Forms of Worship are entirely conformed to Scripture, and generally expressed in the very words of it, whereby she teaches all her children to worship God their heavenly Father in his own language; I do therefore also still say, that we of the Church call no man master upon earth, and no man father, for one is our Master and Father in Heaven, in the sense of our blessed Savior, Matt. 23. 8, 9. which does not forbid us to call men master and father, as terms of respect and reverence, but as implying an implicit faith in them and submission to them, like servants to their masters, and children to their parents. Thus St. Paul justly assumes to himself to be the spiritual Father of those whom he had begotten thro' the Gospel, yet says he, "not as having dominion over your faith, but as helpers of your joy," 1 Cor. 4. 15, 2. Cor. 1. 24. In this sense it is that we call ministers masters, and bishops fathers. And what a mean quibble is it for him to object this, when he would take it hard not to be called Mr. G. and Reverend Sir, which is the same with Reverend Father. I would add here, that our Savior may be reasonably supposed in that text to forbid his disciples going into sects and divisions, following different masters or heads of parties, as the Corinthians did, one saying I am of Paul, another I am of Appollos, etc, 1 Cor. 1. 12. In this sense, which was what I principally intended, we say we call no man master upon earth, we are neither Calvinists, *i. e.*, disciples or followers of Calvin, nor Arminians, *i. e.*, disciples or followers of Arminius, etc., but

Christians only, as being the followers and disciples of Christ alone.

In the next place, he would willingly have it believed yet, that we are Jacobites, and High-Flyers, notwithstanding all I can say or do for our exculpation. We have taken the oaths to our most gracious Sovereign King George, we pray for him, we preach up all loyalty and fidelity to him; and the utmost abhorrence of the contrary interest, and our practice and behavior is all of a piece herewith, and yet he insinuates we may be Jacobites after all, p. 19. Well, all I can say, not only with respect to this, but many others of his odious insinuations, is, that there is no fencing against a flail: one might as well as pretend to dispute a whirlwind, as to reason with this scrupulous surmiser.

This point he would justify by a fling at the late Bishop of Rochester and another clergyman, which is compounded of nothing but malice and impertinence, the shining ornaments of his book. The latter quality saves me the trouble of a disquisition into the characters of those persons; and it is answer enough to ask him, whether he would think I used him fairly, if I should argue thus about him. Heath and Cummin in Queen Elizabeth's time (as Mr. Strype tells us) pretended to be Presbyterians, and preached against the Pope, and prayed and pleaded for a further Reformation, and pressed forward earnestly towards the glorious zenith of Presbytery, as this man does, and yet they proved at last to be arrant Jesuits, and promoting the Pope's interest all the while: so may this J. G. be a Papist for ought any thing we know: I say how abusive would he think me, if I should argue thus: however all I would say is, judge not that ye be not judged.

We are now come to his talk about ceremonies, which is a word, that the continual din and noise made about them, has rendered odious and frightful to the vulgar, tho' all that is meant by them, is only certain appointments of things in their own nature indifferent, made by lawful human authority, for the more decent, orderly and edifying administration of the worship of God. Concerning which, I shall first vindicate the lawfulness and expediency of ours in answer to his exceptions against them; and then show upon what foot it is, that we hold our obligation to observe them. As to the first of these — the first I mentioned was the surplice. And as to this I showed from Ezek. 44. 17, and Rev. 19. 8, the propriety, lawfulness and significancy of this garment, and I might have added Rev. 4. 4, where the elders are represented as clothed in

white. And here, p. 21, he fully agrees with me, that the sacred officers should be distinguished by a peculiar garment. But he says, why should they appear in white, and sometimes in black in the same service? I answer they never do so: I take it, the worship is one service, and preaching another, entirely distinct; for the minister acts in quite a different capacity in presiding over the congregation in offering up their devotions to God, from what he does in preaching and teaching them their duty to him. Now I cannot see but there is as good reason for distinguishing these different services by different habits, as the clergy from the laity, which he allows. And if it be proper to distinguish them, as he grants, and government, for such good reasons as I have given, hath appointed the proper habits, I still say, it betrays not only littleness of mind and narrowness of soul, but also too much of a factious disorderly spirit, to disobey it.

The next thing I mentioned was sponsors, or god-fathers and god-mothers in baptism. And on this head I said, what can be more proper or expedient, than when the child is admitted into Covenant, that somebody should answer it's part in it's name. etc. Here he says, the child was in Covenant before, by virtue of it's parents professed faith, otherwise it could have no right, etc. Now this is what I can't understand. And I would ask, how then any children have a right to baptism whose parents did never profess the Christian faith. According to his doctrine, no children could be baptized, but those of Christian parents. This he has no proof for, nor any reason does he produce, nor can any good reason be given, why merely the parents' faith should entitle them to baptism, or the want of it forbid them. Not only Abraham's children, but all that were born in his house, nay, and bought with his money, were circumcised, Gen. 17. 12. Why then may not such be baptized? We of the church hold, that it is the prospect or good hopes the church has, that a child will in all probability have a Christian education, which gives it a right to baptism, and that it is not properly in Covenant till they that undertake for its education do in its name answer its part of the Covenant; upon which occasion the minister in God's Name engages that he will fulfill his part, and affixes the seal accordingly which he has appointed. And till this be done, I can't see what propriety there can be in saying it is in Covenant; for a covenant implys engagements undertaken between the parties covenanting; till therefore such engagements

are undertaken on both sides, and regularly sealed, there is no covenant completed. Now since the church looks on the prospect of a Christian education, as that which immediately entitles the child to baptism, therefore it is that she insists on a double security for it. She knows that God and nature have made it the parents' duty to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and therefore she does not require any express promise of them, but because they may fail, she insists that they should have others undertake with them, as a further and additional security. And where is the evil of this? I am sure he has proved no evil in it, nor can he. Indeed that he might seem to make a bluster, he calls it a daring presumption, as tho' we pretend to mend those rules which infinite wisdom hath calculated, as he expresses it, as if God designed by the rules he hath made, to exclude all human prudentials. But for this he has not the least shadow af an argument. If in any instance duty is not done, this is no more an argument against the goodness of an appointment of the church, than it is against the ten commandments, or against human laws appointing guardians, etc. And the canon he quotes which forbids parents answering as god-fathers, is so far from declaring against this double security, as he insinuates, that it was ordered for this very end that there might be a double security; since if the parents, who are supposed to be engaged by nature, were admitted to answer as sponsors, the others might be apt to think themselves excused from any obligation, and so it would at length be in the more danger of dwindling into an useless ceremony.

As to the sign of the cross, p. 23, I mentioned it as being after baptism, and not in baptism, to intimate that it does not in the Church's sense properly belong to the office of baptism, but is only used after the administration of it, in the public declaration of the child's being, by virtue of its baptism, received into the flock of Christ: for which reason it is not used in private baptism, and yet the Church declares that it is complete without it. And as to the expediency of it, I said that we used it to put us in mind that we should be so far from being ashamed of the Cross of Christ, that with St. Paul, Gal. 6. 14, we should rather glory in it, and since it was commonly used in the church within a hundred years of the apostles, as appears from Tertullian and St. Cyprian, it appeared to me very probable that it was alluded to by St. John in Rev. 7. 3. To this he has the amazing uncharitableness as to say, that I had

reason to fear lest divine justice should have smitten my right hand with a leprosy, when such words dropt from my pen. What bitterness of spirit does this express! I may at least guess what to expect had he the disposal of God's judgements: however I bless God I am not in his power, and in truth, after serious reconsideration of this passage, I cannot see any reason I had to fear God's displeasure on the account of it: and as I am not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but do glory in it that I worship a crucified Savior, and suffer in his cause from this most abusive writer; so I still think this practice a very proper and suitable expression of it.

And here he has taken a great deal of pains, most invidiously and injuriously to insinuate, that the sign of the cross is a new sacrament of the church's making, and that even according to our own definition of a sacrament, that it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, etc. Now to this I answer, that all his talk on this head is merely a contrived piece of delusive sophistry, without so much as a shadow of any foundation. And one would be tempted to think that nothing but an obstinate resolution to put such odious and groundless constructions upon this innocent ceremony.

For,

1. As to the sign itself, it is only the sign of the cross; unless therefore the cross were an inward and spiritual grace, it cannot be pretended that the sign of it is a sacrament. However,

2. We allow that the use of this sign after baptism, is appointed to be significant of the obligations the person baptised is laid under by that holy ordinance, to exercise the spiritual graces of faith in a crucified Savior, and courage and stedfastness in adhering to Him in spite of all temptations to the contrary. And supposing, in this sense, it were an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, it would not therefore be a sacrament; for by the same reason, every name of a spiritual grace (such as piety, justice, mercy, etc.) would be a sacrament, and if you should name a child, Hope or Charity, you would give it a new sacrament; since none can deny but they are outward and sensible signs of inward and spiritual graces.

3. That therefore, which is the distinguishing character of a sacrament, is, that it be ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive spiritual grace and a pledge to assure us thereof. Now this essential character of a sacrament, does not, and

cannot belong to the sign of the cross, since it is not ordained by Christ, nor was it ever pretended by the church to be ordained as a means whereby we receive grace, or a pledge to assure us thereof: nor is there a syllable of all that he has alleged, and after all his mangling work, that can be justly interpreted to imply any such thing. Yes, he says, it is to operate grace morally, to stir up the dull mind of man, etc. I answer,

4. No otherwise than as words do. None will deny that words and exhortations, aptly addressed to the minds and consciences of men, do operate morally on them, to stir them up to the exercise of spiritual graces, but no body ever therefore took them to be sacraments, because they are not means of grace, of the same kind with sacraments; which are appointed by Christ to be seals of the covenant of grace to the right use of which, he hath by promise graciously annexed the bestowment of spiritual grace: (so that all he says on this head, equally proves preaching the Word to be a sacrament, or indeed any good serious discourse between Christians in private conversation.) Whereas,

5. Our ceremonies are not, nor were they ever designed, or taken, to be seals and assurances from God of his grace to us, but only hints and remembrances of some obligations we are under with respect to Him. And this kind of significant usages hath ever been taken up without any imputation of introducing new sacraments; and this was the only intent of our church, not only in the sign of the cross, but in all her other ceremonies, that they should be used as a kind of language, that, according to the ancient custom of the primitive church, we should by actions as well as words outwardly testify our devotion to God and Christ, and acknowledge our obligation to all fidelity and sincerity in the service of our Creator and Redeemer. And indeed appointed significant actions are as properly language as articulate sounds; so that there is really no more reason to object against this kind of language, than any other that is used in our service or yours. Thus bowing and kneeling, and standing and sitting, in the several respective parts of service in which they are used, are so many actions expressive of certain inward tempers and dispositions of mind, suitable to the several occasions on which they are appointed. And thus we use the sign of the cross, not as a sacrament or means of grace, appointed to seal or convey the grace of the new covenant (far from this) but as a

significant memorial of our obligation, being baptized into the death of Christ, not to be ashamed of Christ crucified, as our church expresses it, but manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue his faithful soldiers and servants to our lives end. And, I pray, where is the harm of all this? Nay, why I beseech you, is it not as proper and significant a language as any other, and as free from any just fault or blame? The words used on this occasion were never found fault with, and as little reason was there to object against the action, which was never considered by our Church as signifying any thing besides what the words import. What needs then all this impertinent clamor?*

In the next place, as to holy days, I showed that they were wisely appointed by the church to commemorate the several steps which our glorious Redeemer took in accomplishing our redemption, etc., and rested our obligation to observe them, upon the same foot as you hold your obligation to observe your fasts and thanksgivings, *viz.*, the command of lawful authority. Now as to our fasts and feasts he says, p. 27, it is no less than a bold invading of Christ's royal prerogative to appoint them; but does not so much as attempt to show why it is not as much a bold invading of His prerogative for you to appoint your fasts and thanksgivings. This therefore I still insist upon, that with the same breath that you justify yours, you justify ours, and he can't show the least difference: for the same temporal blessings you fast and give thanks on the account of, are to be prayed for and acknowledged on every Lord's Day, as well as the spiritual blessings we commemorate on our feasts and fasts. So that the strongest reasons are clearly on our side, as much stronger than yours, certainly, as spiritual blessings are greater than temporal, the fruits of Christ's coming into the world, than the fruits of the earth. Indeed God commands us to keep holy the Sabbath Day, which is now the first day of the week, to pray and give thanks for all blessings temporal and spiritual; but it is not therefore unlawful for us to yield him our free-will offerings, by appointing other days to be kept holy for some particular purposes of either kind. This is what we are all agreed in; and why, I beseech you, may not we appoint other days to be set apart for public worship, as lawfully as you? All his talk therefore about new sabbaths,

* For a full answer to this objection, read A.Bp. King's excellent answers to Mr. Boise.

is as impertinent and abusive as that about a new sacrament. And I still say, notwithstanding his great boasting, that for want of your observing the festivals of Christ's birth, resurrection, ascension and his sending the Holy Ghost, you scarce ever hear those great fundamental principles of Christianity, duly explained and enforced: I can truly say, tho' I lived 25 years among you, I never heard either of those great articles of your faith, particularly and professedly opened, proved and insisted on.

As to your objection against us from Mat. 15, 9, about teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, I showed that it concluded nothing against us; unless you could prove either first, that we did with the Pharisees advance human inventions into essential doctrines, as they did the washing of hands, before eating, etc., holding their traditions of equal authority with the written law: or, secondly, that by, and for the sake of human appointments, we justle out, and set aside divine commands, as they did the 5th Commandment by their Corban, neither of which ever were, or can be proved against the Church of England. All his answer to this is, that I could not answer the objection, and that I deal very unfairly with the context, and rend it in pieces; without so much as endeavoring to show wherein I did so. What was incumbent upon him, if he would have done any thing to the purpose, was in answer to my challenge, to show one Scripture doctrine rejected, or one divine law set aside, or any thing enjoined as necessary in itself which is not so, by the Church of England, which were what the Pharisees were blamed for: but to this he makes no manner of reply.

And as lame is he in his reply, p. 25, to my answer to that objection from Jer. 7, 31, where God gives that as a reason of his displeasure with his people for their building high places and worshipping idols, that he commanded them not. I told you the meaning of it was that he had forbidden them. To this he only answers, my gloss was very unjust, without showing wherein. Now as to this, I appeal to all that know what is meant by that figure called *meiosis*, whether this expression be anything else: I commanded them not, *i. e.*, so far from this, that I strictly forbade them; for everybody knows that what he here complains of, he had peremptorily forbidden them: so that what he calls a moral reason, is only a figurative expression, for, that it could not, literally understood, be any reason at all, I shall show presently, because, as St. Paul says, Rom. 4, 15, "where

no law is, there is no transgression": where no law forbids a thing, there is no transgression in doing it.

Nor has he so much as attempted one syllable of reply to the answer I gave to your objection about offending weak breathren. And he owns you are in an error in enjoining your church covenant and relations; and only says, your errors will not lessen our guilt, p. 28. So that even according to him, you are as guilty of unwarrantable impositions as we, and do as really teach for doctrines the commandments of men; tho' this I have proved the Church does not, according to our Savior's meaning. Thus this great champion who pretends to defend your cause, miserably leaves you in the lurch, where you most wanted his help.

And now I proceed to the second head I mentioned, *viz.*, upon what foot it is that we hold our selves obliged to observe the appointments of our church. And upon this head, he says, if it were to save a million of souls, we must not let go the least trifling ceremony, p. 20. To which I answer, this sophistry is equally levelled against all government, and all churches. In your churches, no body shall be admitted without submitting to your church covenant, and in some places, without a relation, and vote of the brethren, etc. Nay, I have known people to go out of the world in the bitterness of their souls, for want of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were refused them by the ministers, merely because it was not the custom in those places where they lived, to administer the sacraments in private houses, tho' on the most urgent occasions, which practices among you, are vastly more unreasonable than any thing can be pretended in the Church of England. Nay, this sophistry of his, entirely subverts his own dear Kirk of Scotland, which asserts, and indeed very justly; Art. XX that "They that under the pretense of liberty, oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, [such as is interposing in matters indifferent] whether civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God, and may be proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the civil magistrate." And indeed there never was, or can be a church or government in the world, but did, and must interpose in some things, for public order, that were antecedently matters of indifferency, which as I said, are what we mean by ceremonies. Now I have proved that there are no ceremonies in our church, the compliance with which, could do the least damage to the souls of men; and therefore if they

don't comply with them, it is not government, civil or sacred that excludes them, but they exclude themselves by refusing to observe the laws of Christ, which require obedience to government in all things not contrary to his laws. And after all he has declaimed, it still remains to be proved, that the church requires any thing inconsistent with the Gospel, or forbids what that requires.

He has got indeed a fine pretense for disobedience, p. 26, where he quotes our Savior saying, Matt. 28, 20, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you; upon which he says, it is a rule in divinity, that where a duty is enjoined, the contrary sin is forbidden. This I allow to be a good rule, and own, that hence it follows that we may not teach any thing for a necessary doctrine of Christ, which he hath not taught and commanded us to teach as such. But does it hence follow, that government may not enjoin, for public order, some things which are declared in their own nature to be indifferent, and only required for external order and decency? No such matter: so far from this, that Christ requires we should not only render to God the things that are his, but also to Caesar, the civil magistrate, the things that are his, Mat. 22, 21. And with respect to ecclesiastical rulers (such he means by those that sit in Moses' seat) he says, all whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do, Mat. 23, 2. So that when he requires obedience to lawful authority in church and state, by this rule of divinity, the contrary vice of disobedience is forbidden. This rule therefore concludes nothing against us, unless he will say that our Savior's meaning when he commands us to obey him, is, that he forbids us to obey even lawful government in things not forbidden by him. This would be fine divinity indeed! What can this mean, but that it is utterly unlawful to obey human authority, even where Christ hath not interposed? And what can this tend to, but to demolish all government, not only in church and state, but even in families also? And what is this, but to make our blessed Savior the patron of all manner of disorder and confusion?

Now that this is the tendency of this man's doctrine, is evident from this, that he says, Christ does, by command limit us, not only to that, all that, but moreover only to that which he has commanded. And now, pray look at home, and see what will come of your own cause. And here I will use the words of Mr. Hart, in his *Bulwark Stormed,* which is a full and complete answer to Thomas De-

launc's *Plea for the Non-Conformists*, which you have often boasted to be unanswerable, p. 35. I say let us examine your own practice, and take Delaune's and this J. G.'s maxim along with us, "for nothing is lawful in the worship of God, according to them, unless it be expressly commanded. But I say God has nowhere expressly commanded your teachers to preach, and the people to pray standing, therefore if Delaune's and this J. G.'s maxim be true, your practice in these particulars is unlawful. Again, nothing is lawful in the worship of God, says Delaune and J. G. unless it be expressly commanded; but I say, and so says Mr. Baxter, *Christ. Dir. Lib.* 3, p. 11, you have no express command for extemporary prayer; therefore, if these men say true, your practice in this particular is unlawful. Again, nothing is lawful in the worship of God, say they, but what is expressly commanded; but I say, and so says Dr. Marton on Jam. 5, 13 (one of your party) God has not so commanded you to sing psalms in metre, and with the tunes you use, therefore your practice in this particular also is unlawful. Again, nothing is lawful in the worship of God, say they unless it be expressly commanded; but, I say, God has no where commanded you to use leavened bread in the Sacrament; therefore in this particular also your practice is unlawful. Again, once for all, nothing is lawful in the worship of God, but what is expressly commanded, say Delaune and J. G. but I say, and so says Mr. Baxter, *ibid.*, p. 111, God has nowhere expressly commanded you to receive the sacrament sitting, or at noon, or to sprinkle children in baptism, or to preach out of a pulpit, or to enjoin a church covenant, etc., therefore either Delaune's and J. G.'s principle is false or your practice in these things is unlawful." So you see how much you are beholden to Delaune and this J. G. for their pleas and remarks, in pretending to defend your cause. They care not whom they ruin, so they do but destroy the Church.

He then impertinently asks, p. 25, will you dare to assert, that we may introduce any thing into the worship of God, as a part of his worship, without a divine institution? I answer, we don't pretend to do any such thing. But tho' we mayn't as a part of divine worship, we may as a circumstance of it, for the more decent, edifying, and orderly administration of it. He asks then, why not cream and salt, and oil and spittle, and I know not what? I answer, because these and the like are indecent, inedifying and burdensome to the

worship of God. However it is time enough to dispute such things with our governors when they require them. We are only concerned to defend what is required; and we are in no danger of having any thing further enjoined, for our rulers can require nothing of us, but what is according to the laws in being, and we find nothing in them, nor could he prove any thing, that does in the least interfere with our duty to God, or the general rule of decency, order and edification. After all he says, we may thank the Papists for all this, for this is their very language, p. 27. Now how abusive is this, when he knows they require many doctrines to be believed, and enjoin many things to be done, that are plainly and directly contrary to Scripture, and our duty to God? How injurious then are such insinuations.

I do still venture to say, that we may lawfully do whatsoever God hath not forbidden, however so great a venture he would represent it, p. 25, and would ask him seriously, where is the great venture of it. All divines admit that there are three kinds of actions, *viz.*, good, evil and indifferent, *i. e.*, such as God hath commanded or forbidden, or such as he hath neither commanded nor forbidden, and these last mentioned are called indifferent: these therefore may be done or left undone at our pleasure; for according to St. Paul's rule before-mentioned, Rom. 4, 15, where there is no law, there is no transgression. Where there is no law that commands or forbids an action, there is no transgression in doing or omitting it; for it being the design of God's laws to restrain our natural liberty in such instances as he knows it will be for our good to be confined to do or avoid, and wherein he requires us to testify our duty, and obedience to him; it is plain, that in all other instances, he leaves us to the exercise of our natural liberty. This seems to me a clear case, but it is as clear, that government both in church and state, is God's own ordinance, and he has made it a necessary duty to us to obey it, and consequently a sin to disobey it; it must therefore according to his will, be in the power of government also, in subordination to him, to restrain our liberty in certain instances. And lastly, it is no less evident, that those actions, which in regard to the Commands of God are indifferent, are the only proper objects of human authority, *i. e.*, wherein our governors may properly, and lawfully interpose, to command, or forbid: for if they were to command or forbid only what God hath commanded or forbidden, our obedience would

not have their authority or commands for its object, but God's; and then those laws of the Gospel which commands us to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, 1 Pet. 2, 13, and to obey them that have the rule over us, Heb. 13, 17, would be empty words, without any meaning. Obedience has ever a relation to commands or prohibitions, and these must be the commands or prohibitions of the authority that commands or forbids; and the apostles here speak of lawful authority, which they must therefore suppose to have a power of interposing by their authority where God hath not interposed by his. They are indeed limited by him, but it is only by the general rules of decency, order and edification, and that nothing be repugnant to his plain declarations; but of this it must reasonably be supposed they are the proper judges to whom the government is committed both by God and man. And when they do thus interpose in what they take to be for the good of the whole, God has made obedience our duty: not that their authority alters the nature of those actions; they still remain what they were before, in their own nature, *i. e.* indifferent; but it is not indifferent whether we obey or disobey, because God has indispensibly commanded us to obey them that are set over us in the Lord, 1 Thes. 5, 12. And if in this case, we should in opposition to their authority, still use our liberty, it would be only for a cloak of maliciousness, and not as the servants of God, 1 Pet. 2, 16.

You will say, what! does he require an implicit obedience? May we not judge for ourselves? I answer, yes; you not only may, but ought to judge for yourselves, and see to it that there be nothing required by authority that is evidently contrary to the Word of God, and inconsistent with your duty to him: but if you would make a just judgment, you must judge seriously, and in the fear of God, as those that must give an account; you must not dispute for disputing sake, nor be governed by a captious, discontented and factious spirit: you must be disposed, as far as possible, to resign your private scruples to the public peace, and the good of the whole, and by no means disobey, unless it be, at least, as evident that what is commanded is contrary to the Word of God, and defaces, desecrates, dishonors and enervates the worship of God, as it is that the Word of God commands you to be obedient: you find it evident in your Bibles, that God requires your obedience to authority, both civil and ecclesiastical. Ask yourselves seriously, is it as evident that

what authority requires is forbidden by Him, or pollutes, disorders, or destroys his worship? Is it as evident that you will not do more damage to the public weal, by indulging your scruples, and for the sake of them, breaking in upon public peace and order, and thereby weakening the hands of government, which also is God's ordinance, than anything you scruple can do to his public worship? I say, these things ought to be most seriously weighed and considered. And sure I am, had those who have dissented from us, acted upon these principles and considerations, as they were in duty bound, there never would have been any separation begun or continued. It is a dreadful thing to break the public peace of a church or government, and nothing can excuse it but a clear conviction that what we divide on the account of, is utterly unlawful, evidently sinful. Every little scruple will not justify it: and if after all we can do to gain satisfaction, we have some scruples that are unsurmountable, we should however still conform as far as possible. How inexcusable then is it to contrive to make scruples and propagate them, to magnify and exaggerate them, and raise mole-hills into mountains, as this man and those like him, do; to strain at a gnat, a little innocent ceremony, and swallow a camel, by breaking in upon public peace and order.

It is pleaded against what I have been saying, that "he that doubteth is (damned," in the original it is) condemned "if he eat," Rom. 14, *ult.* I answer, the Apostle in this chapter is speaking only of those things wherein authority, neither divine nor human, had interposed, as was the case of meats and days appointed in the Mosaic Law, after the abolition of it, and shows how Christians should conduct towards one another in such cases, that they should receive one another, and not judge one another, etc. But he is far from meaning that public order and government, when things have been established in the best manner, for the good of the whole, should give way to every private man's trifling scruples, and be demolished for the sake of them, or be continually chopping and changing like the wind. This would be contrary to that unity and obedience which he every where requires, 1 Cor. 12, 14 to 26. Phil. 3, 16. Rom. 15, 5, 6. Phil. 2, 2. Rom. 16, 17. Heb. 13, 17, etc., and to our Savior's prayer, John 17, 21. And upon this foot there would be no end of scruples and indulgences, divisions and subdivisions, and no public peace and order could be provided for. No, the truth and right of

the case is, if I would do justice both to myself and the public under my scruples, I should set what is clear in balance against what is doubtful, and this will determine what choice I ought to make. Thus I should fairly state the case, I doubt (and therefore it is supposed I am not clear in it) whether I may lawfully comply with such a ceremony. But it is clear on the other hand, if I don't submit to what is established, I shall destroy the public peace, and enervate government: therefore I can no longer properly speaking, make a doubt of it, whether I should comply. So that tho' in a case not decided by authority, if I should doubt I ought to abstain by this rule of the apostle, yet if lawful authority has interposed, the case is altered, and it is my duty to resign my doubt, which implies some uncertainty, to the public sense, to which I ought to pay a great deference, and to the good of the whole, which should be ever held sacred, and ought to be vastly dear to me, and which on the other hand, by my insisting on my scruple, will certainly be infringed. But for a more full and complete solution of this, and indeed all other cases of this kind, I refer to Dr. Bennet's excellent *Abridgement of the London Cases*, p. 267, etc.

And now I am upon this subject, I will take occasion once for all, to vindicate my self and brethren, from the imputation of the heinous sin of schism, which this man has the assurance to charge us with, in going over from the way of these churches, into the unity of the established, pure and primitive Church of England. P. 34. he says, you had a general peace in your churches, till we made a causeless defection from you. To which I answer. First, as to your general peace, God knows, there was little enough of it, and indeed, how impossible it was, or is, for you to subsist peaceably under such a mere shadow of ecclesiastical government as you have among you, which from the nature and conduct of it, we saw, and your own sad experience finds, to be sinking more and more every day, into what will eventually prove little better than none at all. And as to what disturbance has followed upon our retiring into the Church, it has not been owing to that, any otherwise than as a mere innocent occasion, but rather to the bitter spirit wherewith some people, without any good reason, are too much disposed to treat the church, and oppose the growth of it. I may however say, that we had in these parts, generally, a tolerable good peaceable temper between the Church and meetings, till this busy stranger

interloped among us (if I may give him his own expression) and has besides not only been the occasion of disturbance where he is, but also assisted in setting up a faction in another place, in opposition to what constitution you have, and the general sense of your own ministers. On the other hand, I am bold to say, that we of the Church have been very tender of meddling in any thing that should tend to make disturbance among you, and your disturbances have been much greater in places where the Church never came, than where it is; and have therefore never been owing to us, but to the weakness and irregularity of your own constitution, and to the wrong notions of church government that generally prevail among you, as might easily be demonstrated.

Secondly, whereas he would aggravate our offence in that as he pretends, we have broken in upon your establishment: as to this, I have already proved from the Lords Justices' letter above mentioned, that you have not any regular establisment at all. And therefore we have, at least, as much right to assert and promote the Church of England here, as you have to assert and maintain the contrary, supposing they were both upon a level in other respects, which I have proved they are not. But pray, with what face can this be objected against us by those who act upon principles which first occasioned the separation in England, from an excellent church which was regularly established? And I desire to know, why it is not at least as lawful to set up the Church of England, side by side with the churches of these countries, as it was for our fore-fathers to set up what they called churches, in opposition to the established church; and this especially,

Thirdly, since our defection was not causeless, and it is not true what he says, p. 35, that I own you are right in the essentials of religion. I said in most of them, not all, as this assertion of his seems to import. And tho' he says, I dare not, I assure him I dare, and do assert, and think I have abundantly proved (in my two letters, printed with *Eleutherius Enervatus*, or the *Answer to the Divine Right of Presbyterian Ordination*, as well as in the letter he pretends to answer, but makes no reply to, on this head: I say, I do assert and have proved) that your administration, especially in the point of church government, is disagreeable to the primitive institution, and that you have grievously erred in casting off the original government which Christ, or at least his apostles, under the guidance of his spirit, established in the order of bishops, as su-

power to presbyters, in the present sense of these words. He pretends indeed, p. 33, that what I allege has been answered over and over again: But this I again deny; and maintain, that the arguments, in the light wherein I set them, have never yet been attempted to be answered. I put the case of Episcopacy at the lowest, and produced at least, as good evidence for it in Scripture, as you have for infant-baptism and the first-day Sabbath, and give, at least, as good answers to your objections from Scripture, as you can do to the Anabaptists in those controversies. And to ascertain myself, that I am right in interpreting the Scriptures on the side of Episcopacy, I use exactly the same method of reasoning, as my antagonists do in the cases of infant baptism and the first day, *viz.*, by appealing to the ancient facts of the primitive church, and show clearly that there is as much, nay more evidence of the fact, that the Episcopal government did universally obtain from the beginning in the primitive church, than they can produce for infant baptism and the first day. So that they must either own they are inconsistent with themselves, or give up infant baptism and the first day, upon the same foot as they declare against Episcopacy.

This, perhaps, is the reason why this man does not undertake to answer what I say on this head, because he knows he has taken the same course in pleading the cause of the first day Sabbath, as I have taken in the cause of Episcopacy; and he must be very tender on this head lest he destroy his own cause. For neither he nor any man alive, can give any reason, why the facts of the primitive church, should not as well be appealed to, for the justification of our interpreting the Scriptures, on the side of Episcopacy, as of infant baptism, or the first day. And I have in my letters above mentioned, produced, at least, as good evidence, both from Scriptures and antiquity, for Episcopacy, as he has for the Sabbath, or my other antagonist for infant baptism. Now I would ask him, or either of them (whether if the country had been generally Seventh-Day Baptists, nay, suppose them established too), they would not have thought it their duty, and that they would have been sufficiently clear of the guilt of schism, if they had set up for infant baptism, and the first day, in opposition to the general sense of the country? And sincerely, I declare, I am fully persuaded, and have clearly proved, that Episcopacy is at least as much an essential or fundamental in religion, as infant baptism, or the first day Sabbath. Besides, I can't but think, I have also fully proved,

that it is a real duty enjoined in the Gospel, to read the Scriptures in public, and use the Lord's Prayer, and this, this very man also confesses, p. 35, 37, tho' (as I am told) he lives in the neglect of them, and finds as much fault with you on these accounts as I do: not to mention those other things, that I proved from Scripture to be wanting among you. Now it is as justifiable a cause of separation, to be in a state, where some necessary things are wanting, and evident duties not allowed to be done, as where some unlawful things are required; and seeing this was our case, and we could not proceed with an unreproaching conscience, for want of a regular commission to act in Christ's Name, with what pretense of justice can he charge us with schism?

I will further add on this head, that my departure from you, my brethren, has never been attended with a spirit of severity, censoriousness or uncharitableness towards you, much less with railing against you, as he again injuriously charges, p. 35. I have indeed always insisted on what I take to be the truth as it is in Jesus, but I have ever done it, in the spirit of meekness. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? Gal. 4. 16. Why should it be thought so? I have ever said, that I charitably believe, you generally mean well, and endeavor to do your duty, and please God in the way you are in, according to what light you have, nor have I ever taken upon me to judge you as insincere, but only to judge for my self, and act for my self, according to the best of my light and ability. I must indeed own, that as I am fully persuaded upon the strictest examination I can make, and with a most solicitous concern not to be deceived myself nor impose upon others, that I am in the right in the principles I have embraced, and the choice I have made, so I am very desirous others should think with me, which is what ought and will be the case with every one that loves his neighbor as himself. But I can sincerely say, I never have used, nor do I desire to use, any other methods for influencing others to think with me, than friendly, calm and dispassionate reasoning, heartily willing that every one should think for himself, and judge for himself, as I have done; and heartily endeavoring that every thing I suggest, either to my self or others, should turn to, and issue in some good practical purpose, which may tend to make us wiser and better; more virtuous and holy here, and happy hereafter: and sure I am, neither truth nor right can ever much suffer under such a management, nor can I think, that any thing

can by this means be promoted, that tends to damnify the moral or political, the civil or religious, the temporal or eternal interests of mankind; all which are certainly, at least as well, provided for in the Church of England, as any other church this day upon the face of the earth. And I must do myself that justice, as to say, that I should even abhor myself, if I had the least suspicion that I lived to any mischievous purposes, or that any thing I said or did, had any tendency to the real damage of my dear country; and that I have as hearty a good will to it, and as solicitous a concern for its welfare, in every thing wherein its true interest consists, as any one that ever was bred or born in it. And it would be hard indeed if I should not have as much at least, as one that is but a stranger in it. If in any thing I am mistaken (as we are all liable to mistakes) I assure you, as far as I can know myself, my mistakes are involuntary, and therefore pardonable; they are my unhappiness and not my fault.

But whatever charitable opinion I willingly entertain of your sincerity, on which account I also hope for your forgiveness if you are in an error: yet this cannot alter my opinion of those things wherein I think you so. Things are of an inflexible nature, they are what they are, let our apprehensions of them be what they will; and therefore as no error is really in itself the less, whatever charitable opinion we entertain of the persons involved in it, and it is not a matter of indifferencey which side we are of; so it deeply concerns every one to see to it what the grounds of his persuasions are, and that it is really truth at the bottom on which he stands. There are a certain number of truths and duties which our Blessed Savior and his apostles have made necessary to be believed and done, and therefore he is really on the side of (what is called) heresy, that denys and rejects any of them, tho' according to St. Austin's say,* a man may not be guilty of formal heresy who does so, provided it be thro' mere weakness, and involuntary ignorance and mistake, and not from a spirit of self-conceit, faction, obstinacy and heretical pravity. In like manner, as there are really certain reasons that will render it not only lawful, but a duty for a man to set up in opposition to the government he is under, and separate from his Christian brethren among whom he dwells; so on the other hand, it must be owned, that there are groundless pretenses for separation, upon which if a man separates, he is really in a state

* *Errare possum, Haereticus esse nolo.*

of schism, tho' he may not be formally guilty of this crime, because he may be involuntarily mistaken, and not conduct under the influence of worldly motives, and with a conceited, obstinate, factious and schismatical temper: which to do is certainly a most heinous sin, and was ever accounted a crime of the deepest die. It therefore vastly concerns every one to see to it, that the reasons upon which his opinion and conduct subsists, be such as will bear the test of a most exact and careful examination, and that, whatever they be, he do scrupulously and conscientiously endeavor to be ever under the influence of a truly Christian temper, a spirit of humility, meekness, charity and universal obedience. What my reasons were, I gave you briefly before, and have been now again just mentioning, and it is my business in the next place to defend them against this sour-tempered, and most unfair dealer in controversy.

1. My first reason against you was, that you are destitute of the Episcopal government, which was at first appointed and established in the primitive church, and continued down for 1500 years, and is still, by God's goodness continued and established in our nation and Mother country, as well as in several other Protestant countries. And here I gave you a short abridgment of the Scripture evidences for Episcopacy, from the nature of a Gospel particular church, as plainly consisting of several congregations, with each an elder at the head of it, and all united under one chief pastor, such as we now call a bishop; of all which I gave instances in the churches of Ephesus and Crete, and in the persons of Timothy, Titus, and the Angels of the seven churches of Asia, confirmed by the universal facts of the primitive church. To all which, as I have said, he makes no reply; and for a further vindication of the Episcopal government, I refer you to my letters above-mentioned, printed with the *Eluthcrius Enervatus*, and the other answer to the *Divine Right of Presbyterian Ordination*, but especially to Bishop Potter on *Church Government*, and *The Original Draught of the Primitive Church* and to several others that were never attempted to be answered. Under this head I told you, that you have utterly forsaken the Scripture rule, in not ordaining deacons, Acts 6. 6, and in the laity's ordaining ministers, for which you have no Scripture rule or example, but the contrary. This indeed you are generally ashamed of, and have long laid aside: but I showed you, from the original Platform agreed upon in 1648 Chap. 9, it was the ancient allowed customs of the country and has prop-

agated a fundamental disorder down to this very day. Now upon these most weighty points, which were the chief objections we have against you, he has not offered one word of a reply; so far is he from being true to the cause he would be thought to defend.

2. My next objection was, that the separation was founded upon an unwarrantable disobedience to authority, both in church and state, contrary to those texts, 1 Pet. 2. 13. and Heb. 13. 17. To this he only answers by talking of your loyalty to King George, which is nothing to the purpose, and against Diocesan Bishops, which I have already answered, and falsely pretends that the missionaries of the church are forced upon you. But does not offer one word to show wherein the church requires any thing of you contrary to the Word of God, which was the only thing incumbent on him.

3. As to my third objection of your being in a state of unjustifiable separation from the church; this he makes no reply to, only would have you believe that this is rather our case, in leaving you to return into the unity of the church; as to which, I refer you to what I have said already above, upon this subject.

4. My fourth reason was, your not reading the Holy Scriptures in public worship, which I proved it to be your duty to do, from Luk. 4. 6, Acts 13. 27, 1 Tim. 4. 13. And as to this he entirely falls in with me, and says your confession of faith requires it; if so, I am sorry you are so inconsistent with yourselves as not to practice it: and I hope you will take the hint from this able defender of your cause, and hereafter reform this gross neglect.

If you profess it to be your faith, that the public reading the Scriptures is a part of divine worship, consider I beseech you, what St. James says, ch. 4. 17. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin"; and a greater than he hath said, "that servant that knew his lord's will, but did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes," Luk. 12. 47. What, my brethren, can tempt you to shuffle out this ordinance of God, but the love of a long extempore prayer and sermon? And if this be not transgressing the commandments of God for the inventions of men, I know not what is, Mark 7. 7. And I hope you will not be angry with me for telling you some of your mistakes, when your own public confession of faith condemns you, as well as the Presbyterian Directory, and the practice of, not only the Church of England, but all other Protestant churches, whether Episcopal or Presbyterian; and when your great advocate himself condemns you. Now tho' he perfectly agrees with

me, that the Scriptures ought to be read in public worship, yet he can't forbear spitting out some of his venom here, p. 35. And notwithstanding he had mentioned it before, p. 9, he falsely represents us as denying to read some of the Canon, and imposing some of the Apocrypha. Now, I know his meaning is, that we don't read some part of the Canon for public lessons: But why must this be abusively represented to the understanding of the vulgar, as tho' we forbid some part of the Scriptures to be read at all. But as to reading them in public, it is true we are not required by the Church (nor is there any reason, why we should) to read all the parts of Scripture in the time of public worship; and I believe any body would think it very abusive to fault any church for not reading many parts of it, such as hard names of places, genealogies, and very obscure prophesies, and the like. Such parts of it, tho' on many occasions, they are very useful, yet it is no disrespect to them to say that they are less edifying to the common people, than the books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*. But as to the *Apocrypha*, it is only some part of it that is to be read, and we are not required to read one syllable of it on the Lord's Day, tho' if we were, it would be much more edifying than any thing this great preacher could offer. Now I will put it to your own consciences, do you really think that such reasons as these will justify a separation from the church established in our nation, *viz.*, because they don't read hard names and obscure prophesies in public on the Lord's Day, and because they read some excellent parts of the Apocrypha (tho' not as canonical Scripture) on week-days?

5. I told you it appeared to me a great duty commanded by Christ, Luke 11. 2, Hat. 6. 9, to use the Lord's Prayer in public worship. Upon this head he flies in your faces, and says you say that unless it be unlawful to obey the express command of Christ, it is lawful to use these words, p. 37. Pray, brethren mark well his words, he says unless it be unlawful to obey the express command of Christ, Luke 11. 2. To do what? Why, to say, Our Father, etc. *i. e.*, to use this form which our Lord taught his disciples. Very well, you see he allows it to be an express command to use it; but then, what a strange expression is this, unless it be unlawful to obey an express command, it is lawful to use it. What? Is it only barely lawful to obey an express command? Certainly I should have tho't it a great duty to obey an express command of Christ; and yet he (strangely inconsistent with himself) goes to

prove that we may lawfully break it; for he pleads that we are not tied by it to the words, but the things; as if to pray "after this manner" in Mat. 6. 9, which might more properly be rendered, to pray thus, did not relate to the words as well as the things, and as if Christ did not mean the same here, as in Luke 11. 2, where he expressly commands his disciples to say, Our Father, etc. But what need I trouble myself to answer what he says here, and his long string of quibbling impertinent questions above, when you see he has himself effectually answered, all he has, or can say; for, pray, what business have we to go to questioning about it, when we have, as he owns, a plain and express command before us? I should willingly answer his questions as fairly as he pleases, if they were not very unfair ones, and if he had not sufficiently answered them himself. But, indeed it would be beneath a fair well-meaning man to ask such trifling questions about precise words, syllables and translations. The result of his queries is, that if we must use the Lord's Prayer at all, we must use it in the very language wherein Christ delivered it, and with a good reason he might have said, if we must read the Bible at all, we must read it in the original. Truly, I should choose to use it in the Greek or Hebrew, if the people understood those languages, but as they don't I would use any good translation; but indeed, that whole page is spent for no other purpose, but to raise a dust that you might not see the truth. For the truth is, he is as much convinced that it is a duty to use this form of prayer as I am, and you may see here the great sincerity of this man; when he talks against the Church, then he says there is no need of using the Lord's Prayer as it is recorded in the Evangelists, but as soon as ever he has turned his back, and engaged with a Brownist, then he says, there is an express command to use these words. Upon the whole, I would observe, that when a man speaks against his own judgment, merely to please a party, he had need be very cautious, or else he will, sometimes, open his mouth so wide, that one may see his very heart, which will spoil all that he has said.

Indeed I fear many of you quiet your consciences in the neglect of the Lord's Prayer, by thinking that you answer the end of Christ's command, by using the substance of it, tho' in words of your own invention. But, I beseech you consider, that the matter of this prayer is put by Christ in the most apposite and comprehensive words possible, and to decline those words of Christ for

words of our own inventing, is to prefer our own inventions before the command of Christ. And can you be so conceited of what you call your gifts, as to think you can word that prayer better than Christ has done? Besides, if you lay aside the words of that prayer, you are in danger of laying aside some of the matter of it too — particularly of that petition, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; for in all the time that I frequented your meetings, I don't remember that ever I heard the substance of that petition in your extempore prayers. In a word, the Lord's Prayer is given us to be, as it were, a badge of our profession, as being the disciples of Christ, and therefore it may no more be altered than the form of baptism, *in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, and both of them were ever used by all Christians, as such without variation, from the very beginning of Christianity. I will only add, if he understood our Prayer-Book, so well as he pretends, he would be sensible that he is very unfair here, to represent us as using it, not only once, but repeatedly in the same service; he might know that Morning Prayer is one service, and the Litany another, and the Communion Service before sermon, a third, in each of which as well as in each of the other offices, we use the Lord's Prayer, according to our Savior's command, "when ye pray," or, as often as you pray, "say, Our Father," etc. — He talks here about "your directory." Pray what directory have you for public worship? You see the man conceits himself in Scotland or Ireland all the while, and quite forgets where he is.

6. I found fault with you, that you are destitute of public forms of prayer, which I proved to be the ancient Scripture-method, from the examples of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Daniel, our Savior in John 17 and Mat. 6. 9 and 26. 44, and the Apostles, Acts 4. 24, etc. And here also he seems to agree with me, that there should be public forms, and says you have not only public prayers, but public forms of prayer, p. 37. Now this is very surprising to me, as I believe it must to you, for pray where are they? I should be very glad to see them. I have been told that one did, not long since, solemnly avouch it, that forms of prayer were no prayer at all. And now another tells you, that you have forms. What this man means by saying you have public forms of prayer, I cant conceive; it is a riddle to me. Sure I am, many of your prayers are miserably without form, consisting of an odd mixture, sometimes addressing God, and sometimes the

audience. However, if, as he says, you have public forms; the question is, which are best, yours or ours. And to make a judgment of this, I say again, seriously, and without levity, I could be glad some of yours might be taken in writing as they are delivered, that you might compare them, and then you would be in a capacity to judge. Our worship, as I told you, is, most of it, the pure Word of God. We always pray to Him, and praise Him, in those prayers, that the Holy Ghost hath dictated: we use the Lord's Prayer, and several psalms and hymns taken from the Scripture, and indeed the whole Book of Psalms once a month. We read the Scripture, and then pray for everything we need for soul or body, in the best words and method that the wisest men by the ordinary assistance of God's Spirit, could contrive, and mostly expressed in Scripture-language. And if there be any extraordinary occasions, we have prayers suited to them. And what can a reasonable man desire more? Instead of all this, you have only one or two extempore prayers. Now tho' I don't think that extempore prayers, on extraordinary unforeseen occasions, such as, sudden calamities and disasters, and the like, are unlawful; yet I am sure, to trust the expressing of all our desires, and especially in public worship, to unpremeditated words, just as our invention shall suggest to us at that time, is such a rashness as Solomon cautions us against, in Eccel. 5. 1, 2, or I know not what rashness is; which text I mentioned in my former letter, but he was too wise to take any notice of it; for he knew it was dangerous meddling with edged tools.

I appeal to you, whether you would not think it a gross rashness in an ordinary person to make a long speech to a king or an honorable assembly, about a matter of great importance, in unpremeditated words? And whether, if many were equally concerned in it, they would not all take care to be agreed in it, before it be offered? As our Savior says, Mat. 18, 19, with respect to prayer, we should be agreed touching anything we would ask. Now if this would be your method in addressing an earthly monarch, about worldly matters: how much more should it be your method in addressing the great King and Lord of heaven and earth, in things that concern your everlasting weal? He says you must be agreed in matter, but not words, p. 38. But pray how can you be agreed in the matter, when you know no more what that will be, in particular, than what the words will be? And how can you know what the matter will be,

but by the words that should express it? You have therefore no other way in this case, but, as I said (like the Papists) to have a kind of implicit faith in your minister. This indeed you might have, if it were as he tells you, p. 39, that such as he, depend upon the Spirit, to teach them how and what to pray, and bring words to their minds. This Quakerish talk I answered in my letter, where I told you, if this were the meaning of "praying by the Spirit," 1 Cor. 14, 15, you must sing extempore as well as pray extempore. When therefore we see these men that are so familiar with the Spirit, sing new psalms extempore; when they make no use of Prayer-Books to learn the art of praying, as I know they do; when there are no foolish, senseless and very unbecoming expressions in their prayers; when no wicked man, who we know has not the spirit of Christ, can pray fluently; then perhaps we may begin to think that the Spirit brings to their minds what to say next upon all occasions. But till we see these things, we can never believe that the Spirit has so much to do in their prayers as they would persuade us. Not but that we own we can't pray acceptably without the assistance of the Spirit of God inspiring us with such holy tempers, dispositions, affections and resolutions as become that holy duty; but further than these, we can see no sense in this notion of praying by the Spirit he pleads for. Upon the whole, it is really a melancholy thing to hear you forever talking of pure worship, and against the inventions of men, when at the same time, your worship is little else but man's invention. For pray consider, what have you in your service, but an extempore prayer and a sermon, and these you can't but see, are your minister's invention, unless you will say, as some Quakers do, that they are as much the Word of God as the Bible. You sing, it is true, two or three verses of the Psalms, but they are turned into metre, and this together with the tunes you use, are but human inventions, and of late date too. And one would think you don't sing as an act of worship, for then, sure you would stand up. The blessing, it is true, is taken from Scripture, but then you have generally something added to it to mend it. This, my brethren, is your pure worship for which you have turned out several divine appointments, such as the Lord's Prayer, reading the Scripture, the people's bearing a part, etc. For your further satisfaction, read Bishop King's *Inventions of Men in the Worship of God.*

7. Another thing I told you wherein you appeared to me to vary

from the Scripture-way of worship, is, that the people do not bear a part in your public worship. And here he says, we do allow them all that the Word of God, and the examples therein, allow them, p. 39. Now would to God this were true, for we desire no more. But alas! what can be more contrary to truth? For any man, with but half an eye, may see that the Word of God and the examples therein, allow and require the people to join their voices in speaking the public prayers and praises. Thus, besides the texts I mentioned before, see Judges 21. 2, "The people came to the house of God, and lift up their voices, and wept sore, and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel," etc. And 2 Chron. 7, 2, "The people bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, He is good, for his mercy endureth forever." Nehem. 8, 6, "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered and said, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord, with their faces towards the ground." Yea, there is an express command for it, in Psal. 106, 48. Let all the people say, Amen. And in like manner, in the New Testament, it is plain from 1 Cor. 14, 16, that the unlearned had a vocal part assigned them in the Christian assemblies, so from Rev. 19, 6, to which he made no reply, and yet had the courage to charge this Scripture way of worship with confusion.

But let us take a view of his comment on two texts that I mentioned to prove this point; one was Acts 4, 24, "They lift up their voice with one accord, and said," etc. Now, says he, it is evident this was a singing voice. Sure he is a bold man, thus to contradict the Holy Ghost: the Spirit of God says, they said this prayer: it is no such thing, says J. G. they sung it. Well, let us see how he proves it? Why, says he, it is evident that part of this prayer was part of the second Psalm. Here now is demonstration! Not a word more to be said! for you know it is impossible to use one sentence out of the Psalms without singing. Had this man ever been at church, he would have seen this argument confuted, for there we use whole Psalms together without singing: and I pray does he never use a sentence taken out of the Psalms in prayer? And does he always sing his prayers? I can't leave this terrible argument without taking notice of a flat contradiction. He had said but the page before, that the apostles did not use either David's, or Solomon's or Hezekiah's

prayers, yet here in the very next page he tells us, that part of this prayer which the apostles used was the express words of the second Psalm, which David composed. This verifies the proverb, they that tell two stories, need have a good memory. But it is no wonder a man should contradict himself that makes bold to contradict his Maker; nor is it any wonder that a man should plead for unpremeditated prayers, that writes without any premeditation or consideration.

He next falls upon Rom. 15, 6, where we are commanded with one mind, and one mouth to glorify our heavenly Father. And says he, this one mouth is the minister's mouth, p. 40. Very fine! And why not the one mind the minister's mind too? and then the people have nothing at all to do, and may e'en go to sleep, or go home and leave the minister to pray for them, for he can do it, according to Mr. J. G.'s sense, with one mind and one mouth, as well without them as with them. Now we take it, that as the one mind signifies the minds of all the congregation, united in thinking the same thing, so the one mouth means the mouths of all the congregation, as it were with one voice saying the same thing. He then propounds two or three childish questions. One is, why don't your people join in reading the Lessons, *i. e.*, Chapters, as well as the Psalms? I answer, because when other parts of the Scripture are read, God is therein speaking to the people, and therefore it is proper for the minister alone to read it, as Ezra did, in Neh. 8, 3. And it was but a little before he had said, that in Scripture times, "one read Moses and the Prophets, and all the people did not read with an audible voice, in a most confused manner," as if we did so: whereas we in this conform exactly to the Scripture pattern. But now he has forgot himself, and asks why don't the people read a part of the Lessons? But on the other hand, the Psalms are prayers and praises, or addresses to God, and therefore all our people join in saying and singing them. He next asks, by what rule do women thus speak in the church? I answer, pray by what rule do women sing in your meetings? There is as good warrant for one as the other, 1 Cor. 11, 5, where the apostle speaks of women praying and prophesying, or singing, as Mr. Mead justly interprets it. Tho' the apostle forbad them to teach or usurp authority over the man, 1 Tim. 2, 12. Yet he never forbad them to join with the congregation in praying and praising God.

Now I hope these difficulties are removed, and our worship wholly cleared from confusion.

And now I am on this head of the people's part in public worship, I will vindicate what I alleged to prove it their duty to say Amen vocally. I produced several texts out of both the Old and New Testaments, which are as full to the purpose as words can be, some of which I mentioned above. Now observe how easily he turns them off. He says, p. 42, my multiplied quotations prove no more than that the people should say Amen privately. I confess, I am much at a loss to know what he means by saying Amen privately, unless it be to say Amen silently, *i. e.*, to speak, and at the same time say nothing at all. This is quite as good as the Quakers silent meetings, which they say are most edifying. But I entreat you to consider, that to assent to a public prayer in my heart is one thing, and openly to testify this assent by saying Amen is another, and that God requires the latter as well as the former. It is a dangerous thing to make a nose of wax of the Scripture, as he does on this, and many other subjects; thus when God requires us to confess with the mouth, as well as to believe with the heart, Rom. 10, 9, 10, to say Amen as well as to think it, for a poor silly mortal to start up and say, it is confusion, and it is more decent to say it privately, etc. How intolerably presuming is this? If this method will do, the Quakers must never be condemned for rejecting outward baptism, and the outward Lord's Supper, so long as they can say they receive them inwardly. Lastly, whereas he represents us here as saying Amen twenty or thirty times in reading the same prayers, I pray what people do so? I am sure the Church of England say Amen but once to one prayer. To use his own words, how hateful are such slanderous insinuations? Upon the whole, I can't but think, brethren, you had but a hard bargain of it, when you were persuaded to give up your most valuable ancient Scripture privilege of bearing a vocal part of the public prayers and praises, and instead thereof are allowed the liberty of holding up your hand to vote in every trifling affair of church discipline: I would therefore wish you to resume that your ancient privilege again.

8. Another thing wherein you appeared to me to have gone off from Scripture rule and example, was your neglect of bodily worship, which I proved to be your duty from 1 Cor. 6, 20, where we

are required to glorify God with our bodies, as well as our spirits. Particularly I proved kneeling in your prayers and other services to be your duty from the command, Psal. 95, 6, and the apostles' example in Acts 20. 36, nay, Christ himself kneeled, Luk. 22, 41. To this he makes no reply, only gives an ill-natured flout, which deserves no notice. I mentioned bowing at the name of Jesus, as a proper token of our submission to Jesus of Nazareth, as our Lord and King, our Savior and our God, in opposition to the Arian and Socinian heresies, and as being sufficiently justified to be lawful from Phil. 2, 10. His only business in answer to this, was to prove that it is inexpedient or unlawful: instead of which he pretends to a little Greek, and says it might be rendered "in the Name," but I say if it was so rendered, it would not be so justly rendered as it is now, and for this I appeal to the critics, and to the scope of the apostle in that context. As for his questions that follow, about doing it but once, and to the East, they are mere quibbles, and I am not at all concerned to answer them, if they deserved any notice, as indeed they do not. I will only say, that it is then most proper to express our adoration of him when we confess our faith in him, and that we do in all other parts of our worship, offer up our addresses to God "in the Name" of Jesus Christ, as well as you.

But the most material objection you have against us on this head is our kneeling at the Sacrament; and as to this, I gave you as briefly as I could, the reasons of our practice. One reason I gave you was this, *viz.*, that the Lord's Supper is the most solemn act of worship that we can perform, and kneeling is the proper and Scripture posture of worship. To which this remarker makes no reply at all. And the reason doubtless was, because he was not able, for he promised at first setting out, that he would do his utmost, p. 2. And because you commonly think that Christ gave this Sacrament to his apostles, sitting, I observed to you, that this was a mistake, for the table posture in Christ's time was leaning; and therefore in sitting at it, you can't pretend to conform to the manner of the first institution. This also he takes no notice of; for answering was not his design, but quibbling.

He indeed tells us that it was first administered in a table-posture, but dare not tell what table-posture he means, for that would have spoiled all: nor does he vouchsafe to give us the least proof of this

bold assertion; for altho' it be easy to affirm, yet it is impossible to prove that it was first administered in any table-posture. And yet he immediately brings a most terrible charge against me as being guilty of "most horrid reflection on the Lord Jesus Christ," p. 41, because I said, how scandalously indecent is it to receive this seal of our pardon, sitting? But why so hasty, friend? What makes you think it a most horrid reflection on our Lord? This is, in effect, to charge me with blasphemy! Do you really think it as horrid a reflection, as that of the Pharisees, who said our Savior had a devil? Or was there never a Jew, Turk or Pagan, that cast a more horrid reflection on Christ? Why then, in the superlative degree? However, brethren, being arraigned at your bar for no less a crime than blasphemy, which is what must be implied in most horridly reflecting on Christ, I plead not guilty; and to acquit myself, I will prove, that it is scandalously indecent to receive the seal of our pardon, sitting; and that to say so, is no horrid reflection on our Savior, because it does not appear that he gave it to his disciples, sitting.

As to the first of these propositions I argue thus: it is a rule allowed by all; and the counterpart of it this very man pretends to, that those commands in the Decalogue, which forbid a sin do at the same time require the contrary duty. Thus when the first commandment forbids us to acknowledge any false gods, it does oblige us to acknowledge the true God. So when the second commandment forbids us to bow down to false gods and serve them; it obliges us to practice the contrary duties in our addresses to the true God, *viz.*, to bow down to Him and serve Him: *i. e.*, to worship Him both with our bodies and minds. Therefore as he that either bows or kneels, or uses any other posture of reverence to a graven image, breaks the second commandment, so does he who in the most solemn act of worship (such as receiving the Lord's Supper) refuses to use some such posture of worship to God: for it is a contempt of God to address his infinite majesty without some posture of adoration, as well as a sin to kneel to an image, tho' without praying to it, as the Papists pretend to do. The one is idolatry, the other sacrilege; for the reason why we are forbid to bow down to an idol, is because it is an act of worship due to God, and whether we give to an image what is due to God, or refuse to pay it to Him, we are equally robbers of God, we deny Him his honor, and are guilty of sacrilege. I beseech you, my brethren, consider this without prejudice: I know

you abhor idolatry; pray do not commit sacrilege, Rom. 2, 22. I before urged this positive command to you, from Psal. 95, 6. "O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Now if ever we would bow our knees to our Maker, we ought, surely, to do it then, when we come to Him in the nearest approaches that we are capable of in this world, and with the highest sense of gratitude that our souls can admit of, to remember and adore Him for the most astonishing instance of love that could be bestowed on us, even giving his own Son to die for us. Certainly if it be not our duty to kneel before God on this most solemn occasion, it is hard to say when we are obliged to it. And he that can so far disregard this positive command of God, as to sit down in this nearest and most solemn approach to him, no doubt but he may with as good reason sit in every other part of worship, and so never bow his knee to God, or give Him any bodily worship, thro' the whole course of his life.

And as sitting at the Lord's Table is a transgression of the positive law of God; so it is likewise contrary to all the rules of decency among men: for this I appeal to any man's conscience. Suppose that for some grievous crime you were justly condemned to die, and when you were come to the place of execution, the King being present, should hold out a pardon to you; I ask in what posture would you receive it? Would you sit on your back-side and take it? No, certainly, you would fall on your knees with the deepest gratitude: And will you be more unmannerly to God than towards man? You know that in the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ, whose death is the alone foundation of our pardon: and as the minister delivers you this holy bread and wine, so God at the same time gives you Christ, and the blessings He has purchased. Now does not even nature teach (as St. Paul says in another case) that it is a shame to receive our Savior, sitting, as tho' we were his companions rather than his subjects. But I proved before, that we are to consider our Savior now as being in a different capacity from what he was while on earth. Then he was in the form of a servant, but now He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and God hath commanded even his angels to worship Him, Heb. 1, 6. Rev. 19, 16. How much more is it a duty incumbent on us sinful mortals? No, says this man, He allows us to be as free and intimate with Him as ever, p. 41. Now I would ask, whether this does not

look something like a reflection on Christ? The Pope indeed conceiting himself Christ's Vicar, looks upon it as his privilege to sit at the sacrament; and pray consider, whether it does not look like symbolizing with him for you to do so? I add lastly, on this head, we find St. Paul severely reproved the Corinthians for their irreverence in receiving the sacrament, and threatened them with damnation for their not discerning the Lord's Body, 1 Cor. 11, 29, *i. e.*, their not making a difference between the Lord's Table and their own, but receiving it as common food. Now he that sits at the Lord's Table, as to his outward deportment, makes no difference between the Lord's Table and his own; he makes no distinction between the body and blood of Christ and common food.

It is pleaded on your side, that if Christ gave this sacrament to his apostles, sitting, then it is lawful at least, for us so to receive it. I answer, it is a great mistake to think that Christ gave it to his disciples, sitting: for every man that has but the smallest acquaintance with the original, and the customs of those times, must know that they did not sit down as we do now, but lay down on couches, so that their feet came behind each other, and they leaned on each others breast, John 21. 20. Well, but say you, this was a table-posture, I answer, we have no reason to think that Christ gave this sacrament to his disciples while they continued in this posture. There is not the least intimation of any such thing in in either of the Evangelists, but it is highly probable that they changed their posture, before they received it. Pray take your Bibles, and turn to Mat. 26. 26. Mark 14. 22. Luke 22. 19. We there find that after they had eaten the supper of unleavened bread, which was called the Passover (but not the paschal Lamb, for that was not killed till the next day, and that by the priest at the temple), I say, after this supper was over, Christ took bread, and gave thanks and blessed it. Now you cannot think, that the apostles continued in that posture, while Christ was giving thanks, and blessing or praying. If you think they did so, why don't you sit still or lie down, while your minister is praying over the bread and wine? No, you think they rose up and put themselves into a worshipping posture, or else how dare you do so? So that it is plain, and your own practice shows you believe that neither Christ nor his disciples did continue in a table-posture, but put themselves into a worshipping-posture, when this Sacrament was instituted. If

you say, none of the Evangelists take notice of their rising up from the table to pray and give thanks, I answer, neither was there any need of it, since the change of action from eating to giving thanks, does sufficiently signify and infer a change of posture. Neither Matthew nor Mark nor Luke mention Christ's changing his posture, from the time that they first sat down that evening, till they arose to go into the garden, and yet it is certain that they did rise up and sit down again after supper, John 13. 4. etc. Now if Christ and his apostles did rise to pray over the bread and wine (which you must own, or condemn your selves) then pray tell me where you find that they sat down again to receive it after it was consecrated? If Mr. J. G. can do this, then I will own my guilt, but till this be done, which I am sure no man can do that has not another Bible than I have, I must look on him as a false accuser. I intreat you therefore, my brethren, no longer to entertain that notion, which has no foundation in the Bible, that Christ gave this sacrament to his disciples, sitting; nor is there one instance in all that holy book, of one good man that worshipped God, in that indecent posture, and it is contrary to many express commands that enjoin bodily worship, as I showed you before.

But Mr. J. G. tells you that kneeling at the sacrament had its rise from those that adore the elements. I answer, it is true he says so, and that is all. Intreat him in his next to prove it, and a great many more untruths that he has confidently asserted. I am sure Mr. Bingham in his *Orig. Eccles. l.* 15. makes it evident, that the primitive church never used the posture of sitting at the sacrament, and that they always used a posture of adoration, either standing or kneeling. He quotes among others St. Cyril, whose words are these, "Approach," says he, "not rudely, but bowing thy self, and in a posture of worship and adoration, saying Amen." Now St. Cyril lived in the year 350, whereas transubstantiation and adoring the elements, came not into the church till about 1200 as Mr. Dallee proves. So that an adoring posture was certainly used, at least above 800 years, before transubstantiation; so far from truth is what he here asserts! But supposing (not granting) that it was so, does that make it unlawful for those to kneel that have no design or thought of adoring the elements? Pray look into our Rubric in the end of the Communion-Service; and then charge us with adoring the elements if you can. And why is it not as good to symbolize with the Papists in using a reverent posture, as with the Arians

or Socinians in an irreverent one. The Arians, or rather Socinians, who deny Christ's divinity, first brought in that indecent practice of sitting at the Lord's Supper, because they thought it unlawful to worship Christ: I don't desire you to take this upon my bare word, as he does what he says, but I will give you the very words of the Protestant church in Poland. The words of their general Synod are these, "Those traitorous fugitives from us to Arianism, were the first authors among us of sitting at the Lord's Table, contrary to the rites used in all the reformed churces throughout Europe; we therefore reject this ceremony as indecent and irreligious." You see they thought sitting indecent and irreligious as well as the Church of England, and they tell us it was not used by any Protestant church in their time. This Synod was held in the year, 1578. And now I hope I have said enough to convince you, if reason or Scripture will convince you, that it is a scandalous indecency to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, sitting.

The last thing I objected against you, was your teaching children that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. For I say, since sin has come to pass, it seems clear to me that you must herein teach them that God has foreordained, *i. e.*, willed, sin, etc. I added, that your doctrine of absolute reprobation, seemed to me directly inconsistent with what God declares with an oath, in Ezek. 33. 11, that "he hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Chap. 18. 32. etc. Now upon this head he says, p. 42, that I call the truths of God, error, and when he has done, he in effect gives them up himself, and pretends to show that you do not teach that God has foreordained sin; tho' it has come to pass, and that you do not hold absolute reprobation. What an inconsistent man is this? He then undertakes to explain what it is you do hold. and I wish you to consider carefully what he says, and see whether you can make sense of it, or indeed any thing, sense or nonsence. In order to show that tho' sin has come to pass, and tho' God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; yet he hath not foreordained sin, he says, "I know little, or use little philosophy, as well as divinity." And to show his own great learning, he adds (for this is what is implied in his questions) that sin has not so much as any physical goodness in it: that there is nothing positive in it: that it is a mere negation of rectitude: a mere non-entity: and that God's works about sin, are a willing permission of it, and a wise and holy gubernation, but no actual efficiency into the real anomy thereof. p. 42. 43. —

And now he thinks he has made it as clear as the sun. I can't imagine what notions you have when you read these wonderful plain passages. By the physical goodness of sin, indeed, you may possibly think he means whether it be good physic or not? But what you can think he means by its being a non-entity, by the gubernation of it, and no actual efficiency into it, and the anomy of it, it is quite beyond me to imagine. However, I will endeavor to explain it to you, as well as I can, in plain English, that you may see what fine doctrine he teaches, when it comes out of the clouds and thick darkness, under which he is obliged to conceal it.

When he says, sin is only a negation, a mere non-entity, the true meaning of it is, that it is not; that, properly speaking, it has no being, or there is nothing in it; for non-entity is as much as to say not-being. And so he has made a very harmless business of it. This is delicate philosophy! and fine divinity! It was by the same sort of philosophy, that some philosophers of old, undertook to prove that pain is no evil, and others, that there is no such thing as motion in nature; and by the same sort of philosophy, some more modern philosophers taught, that it is better to be exquisitely and forever miserable, than not to be: and it is by the same kind of philosophy, that some infidels of these times undertake to prove, that there is no such thing as liberty of acting, either in God or man. I confess, I am not ignorant either of this philosophy, or divinity, tho' God forbid I should use any of it. No, my brethren, this is an instance of that vain philosophy, that science falsely so called that St. Paul bids you beware of, Col. 2. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 20. And I earnestly exhort you with him, to beware of it, and of the pernicious notions it tends to ensnare and intangle you in. The doctrines of the Gospel are plain and easy, and level to ordinary capacities: they don't need this cobweb-philosophy to be employed about them. It only confounds them, and renders obscure the plainest things in the world. Take heed therefore that ye be not led away by them from the plainness and simplicity of the gospel. He would be thought to be a Paulonite, as he expresses it, and pretends the Church of England teaches as he does; but I am sure, neither St. Paul, nor the Church of England teach any such doctrine as he does here, and which he has not one text to justify. Where, I pray, do St. Paul, or the Church of England teach that sin is a mere negation, and only a non-entity, and has nothing positive in it, etc.? If it were nothing but a mere negative, sinners

might be tempted to hope they shall escape any other punishment than the mere negation or denial of happiness; but you may depend upon it, that without repentance it will finally meet with positive punishment, even exquisite pain and torment. Besides, is there not a positive perverseness, stubborness and wilfulness of opposition in the hearts and lives of wicked men to the Will of God, (Rom. 8. 7.) as well as an indolent inactivity in neglecting to obey it? And are there not postive transgressions of negative precepts or prohibitions, as well as negative omissions of positive duties? The truth is he does by this doctrine confound the very assembly's Catechism, which it was his business to defend, for that defines sin to be, not only, a want of conformity unto (which is the negative part of it) but also a transgression of the Law of God, which is the positive part of it. However, whether according to his metaphysics, it be entity or non-entity, be it negative or positive, I am sure none can deny, that it hath, properly speaking come to pass; and therefore, in a word, so sure as sinners are conscious to themselves of an inward aversion to holiness, and pleasure in sinful practices, and of a violent, habitual, impetuous tendency towards the commission of them; so sure as you see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and understand with your hearts, that there are such things, as murders, thefts, oppression, lying, swearing, cursing, etc. so sure sin has, properly speaking, a being in the world; and so sure it is that God could not ordain or will it, and therefore he has not foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Indeed he durst not speak out and own the conclusion, tho' it be so evidently contained in the premises; and therefore he says, what God does about sin, is, a willing permission of it: That is (in plain English) tho' God does not decree sin, yet he is very willing it should be, because, otherwise (according to his doctrine) he could not get glory to his justice in the punishment of it. But this is not a whit better than to say He decreed it; for he that wills the end, must will the means. To permit sin (especially according to his metaphysical explication of it) may seem too strong an expression; but if all that is meant by it were, that God does not positively interpose to hinder it: this we allow; because so to do would be to alter his own workmanship, by laying a necessity upon those creatures which he has made to act freely, and this he could not do, consistent with the law of their nature which he has made, *i. e.*, he could not wisely do it, at least in the ordinary course of things;

and because to necessitate them to good or bad, would be to destroy the very being of duty or sin, of virtue or vice, since the very essence or nature of virtue or duty consists in the free and willing obedience, and of vice or sin, in the free and wilful disobedience to the Law of God. The other of God's works about sin, he says, is the gubernation, *i. e.*, the government of it. This is an odd expression: however I shall not contend with him about it, provided what he means by it, is only, that God over-rules the sins and follies of men in such a manner as to bring good out of evil, and make them turn to the advancing of his own ends in the government of the world. This I own he may do, without doing any thing Himself that shall necessitate them to sin: which I suppose, is what he means by His having no actual efficiency into the real anomy thereof. But I can't help observing here, what an odd way of speaking it is to talk of the anomy of sin: it is as much as to say the sin of sin, for anomy is only a Greek word, by which the same thing is meant, as we mean by the English word, sin, 1 John 3. 4. To speak thus, therefore, is to distinguish where there is no difference, which is what obscures and confounds that which otherwise would be plain and intelligible; as tho' God might necessitate the action, which is sin, without having to do in the depravity of it, which really implies a contradiction.

As to the doctrine of absolute reprobation, this he does, in effect, give up: for he says, p. 43, God did not ordain any creature to absolute damnation, but to damnation for sin. And p. 44, that you do not teach that God hath decreed the absolute damnation of any man. Now if it be thus, it is very well, I have no fault to find with this; it is I own exactly agreeable with what we teach. The doctrine of our church conformable to the Holy Scriptures, is this, that God hath, thro' Christ, predestinated the righteous, the virtuous and holy to everlasting happiness and glory, and ordained the obstinate and impenitent, to everlasting misery and perdition. St. Paul says, Rom. 8, 29, whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate. Who he foresaw would repent, believe and obey the Gospel, these are they whom he had chosen in Christ out of mankind, to bring them to everlasting salvation, as our church expresses it in her 17th Article, and those who would obstinately persist in their disobedience and impenitence, notwithstanding all the means he should use to reclaim them, these he determined to reject. This

is our doctrine, and if he would teach no otherwise, I should have nothing to object. But I must remark here two things: one is, that in denying absolute reprobation he denys his own articles, and therefore with what face can he charge me with denying any of the articles of the Church. That he denys his own articles in denying absolute reprobation, is evident: for these are the words of your Assembly's Confession of Faith which he has assented to, p. 20, 21, "God hath not decreed any thing because he forsaw it as future, or would come to pass upon such conditions." And "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated to everlasting life, and others are fore-ordained to everlasting death." And "these angels and men thus predestinated and ordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished." You see it is plain from these words of your Confession, that they are particularly, unchangeably and unconditionally, or absolutely, ordained, some to everlasting life, and others to everlasting death, and not because God foresaw such or such conditions; either holiness in the one, or sin in the other. So that, as I said in denying absolute reprobation, he plainly denies his own articles; let him therefore hereafter forbear charging others with denying theirs. But the other remark I would make here, is, that he is not only inconsistent with his articles, but also with himself. For he had said just before, that in God's decrees, He consulted the counsel of his own will, and not the wills of any of his creatures. Whereas, if he decreed the reprobate to damnation for sin, as he owns here, and if they fall into sin by their own wills, as he here also says, it is plain that God in ordaining them to damnation must have had an eye at their wills in making this decree. So apt are those on that side to run into contradictions in explaining their notions! To conclude, I earnestly beseech you, brethren, to beware of these doctrines, so full of inconsistencies, and I may add, of most fatal and pernicious consequences, as tending to beget in your minds very gloomy, hard and unworthy thoughts of God, and to dishearten and discourage you from an earnest and engaged pursuit of the eternal interests of your souls: since any one will be apt to say, if my fate is already before-hand determined by an absolute inexorable decree of God, all my endeavors can do no good: if I am to be saved, God will sometime or other bring me

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home, whether I strive no; and if I am to be forever miserable, all my endeavors can never prevent it: than which conclusion, nothing can be more pernicious to the souls of men! Let me rather exhort you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do: and you may depend upon it there is no absolute decree in your way; you shall reap in due time, if you faint not.

But I have done with this unaccountable man for the present, and am not conscious that I have in any thing misrepresented either him or myself: I will only desire you to compare things exactly and impartially, and to weigh and consider well the true merits of the cause between us, without favor or affection.

I perceive some of you triumph in his victory over me: but I can't help thinking, but that, if you would be impartial in making your judgment, you would find his advantage over me to consist only in quibbles, inconsistencies, misrepresentations, glaring falsehoods in matters of fact, hard speeches, and censorious and abusive language; and in these, I am content he should have the victory, especially since I know I have truth, reason and Scripture on my side. And I will leave it to you, and all that will be reasonable, dispassionate and impartial, to judge between us, whose letter is most void of truth, charity, meekness and moderation, and which favors most of the spirit of the Gospel. He says, if I had not laid aside all show of modesty, I would not have mentioned anything of our being styled grievous wolves and false brethren, for that was what I complained of. Now I must confess, I am not so very modest as to receive such injurious treatment without declaring that I think it most abusive and unchristian, and am sure nothing can justly be pretended on our side that can compare with it. If he will lay aside his sour wrangling way of writing, and fairly and calmly attend to the real merits of the cause, and reason soberly, without railing, scoffing and reviling, as it becomes a gentleman and a Christian, and like a lover of truth and righteous dealing. I shall willingly attend him again; but if he thinks fit to go on in the manner he has done, I shall think him hereafter beneath my notice, and endeavor to find some more advantageous method of spending my time. In the mean time, as I have devoted my life to serve the eternal interests of the souls of men, so I shall be heartily glad to make my self any ways useful to you and yours, in endeavoring to

promote truth and holiness among you here, and your everlasting happiness hereafter: for I sincerely still remain,

Dear Brethren,

Your hearty Friend,
and Well-Wisher.

A Postscript to this Second Letter.

There being an appeal made, in the foregoing letter, to two letters published, in *Elutherius Enervatus,* as containing sufficient evidence of the Apostolical institution of Episcopacy; and there having been just published, a pretended answer to those two letters, by one who styles himself Phileleuth. Bangor: tho' it be tho't needless to enter upon a very particular examination of this vainglorious triumph, yet it seemed not unnecessary to add here, some brief animadversions of the author of these letters, by way of reply to it; which are as follows.

It would be almost endless, if I should take notice of every particular instance of this gentleman's unfair dealing: he often strains my expressions, and those of the authors he quotes, into meanings which neither they nor I ever intended, and then laboriously fights with his own shadow. In other instances, and those very many, he has nothing but a set of mere quibbles, for two or three pages together. And in others he seems industriously to go besides the question, insomuch that I really wish I could see for what end he could write, at least, half this long-winded pamphlet, unless it were purely to amuse his readers with a tedious verbosity, and to see how much he could say upon the subject. In such a captious, quibbling way of writing, there is truly scarce anything but what may be answered: even the most sacred causes of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, nay, and Christianity itself, are not without adversaries, that can find art enough to make a plausible pretense of answering. With respect to such a management it was, that Mr. Baxter, as I remember, says, somewhere, "he should never think the worse of a book because it was pretended to be answered." And as to the letters under consideration, I can't think but I may say, with, at least, as much justice as Elutherius does concerning his *Dialogues,* p. 2. "That a new edition of them would be a sufficient reply to his invectives."

The main artifice that runs thro' his performance, consists in

producing long and numerous quotations from several of the most considerable writers of our church, especially in their writings against popery, which he would have his unwary readers believe, from a mere jingle of the words, to be destructive to the cause of the church to which they adhered, and which they so admirably defended. As if those great men did not know how to write consistent with themselves; or, as if what we plead for were arrant popery, and the arguments and manner of speaking they use, were as much inconsistent with, and subversive of what we plead in behalf of Episcopacy, as of the great corruptions of the Church of Rome, which they impugn. Seriously I can scarce conceive, how this gentleman can think himself in earnest, in the use he pretends to make of those passages; for there is not a tenth part of all his numerous quotations from Jewel, Hooker, Chillingworth and Tillotson, etc., but which take them as they lie in the authors themselves, and with the views they had in writing them, and I do highly approve of them, and can find nothing in them, that is at all really inconsistent with what I contend for, nor with the way of reasoning that I use. They were certainly as great and good men, and as excellent defenders of our church, as ever the nation bred, and are remarkable for a prodigious vein of reason and eloquence. And I can't help saying, with respect to Hooker and Chillingworth in particular, that it seems to me, the man who has seriously read and considered, and at the same time is not convinced by their mighty reasonings in behalf of Episcopacy, as well as the other things they contend for, must have a mind of a very strange and odd sort of make.

This Mr. Phileleuth, indeed, pretends, p. 3, from Edwards's authority, that Mr. Hooker, l. 3, held Episcopacy was mutable, and might be abrogated; which is a specimen of Edwards's usual abusive misrepresentation of his authors. For the truth is, Mr. Hooker is there speaking of prudential constitutions, respecting the circumstantials of the Episcopal government, and other institutions of religion, and not of Episcopacy itself, which he strenuously holds to be founded on the Word of God, in that very book, § *ult.*, and the same is evident from his 7th book, where he says, § 1, (and afterwards abundantly proves it) "Neither hath Christianity been ever planted in any kingdom throughout the world, but with this kind of government alone, which to have been ordained of God, I am for my own part, as resolutely persuaded, as that any other kind of

government in the world whatsoever is of God." Could he then think it mutable or that it might be abrogated? What is there that some people, to serve a turn, will not say?

And as to Mr. Chillingworth's demonstration of Episcopacy, let Mr. Phileleuth. say what he will about Edwards's stricture, and one Lauder's pretended confutation of it, p. 136. I can't yet believe there ever was, or will be, a just confutation of it; for it really is, what it pretends to be, a demonstration in its kind. And for this gentleman to pretend, because Mr. Chillingworth, in his modest way of speaking mentions Episcopacy, as being not repugnant to the government left in the churches by the apostles, etc., that this is all he undertakes to prove, is very wrong, for he knows that what he undertakes to demonstrate, is, that it was really instituted by the apostles, and that it is to this conclusion that he affixes his *Q. E. D.* And does this make nothing to our cause? Pray wherein does the "unaccountable folly" consist of my alleging this demonstration? I am not willing to say, it was an unaccountable want of integrity in him, to misrepresent it as he does. He says, we read nothing there of Episcopacy's being a fundamental of religion: but, if it was an institution of the apostles, as he has demonstrated it to be, I desire to know how much that falls short of making it a fundamental, since the apostles were under the direction of the Spirit of God in planting and settling the churches. I own it is only an external of religion, and so were the two sacraments, and I should be glad to be informed, supposing it proved to be an apostolical institution, why it is not at least as much a fundamental in Christianity, as infant baptism and the first-day Sabbath, which I conclude he holds to be fundamentals, *i. e.*, necessary; why then should he be so much amazed as he pretends to be, that I esteem Episcopacy fundamental. Sure I am, government, and a proper form of it, are things of importance enough in themselves to be made fundamentals, by being appointed by the apostles; and I will be free to say, that if Mr. Hooker and Mr. Chillingworth, and I may add, Potter, Slater, Sage, Brett, Bingham and many others (nay even Hoadly himself) have not, by fair and just reasoning, proved the apostolical, and consequently, divine institution of Episcopacy, so that nothing but scepticism, that will cavil at anything, can pretend to dispute it, I for my part shall despair of ever seeing anything proved.

The chief use he makes of Mr. Chillingworth against me is to disprove what I plead for, respecting the use we make of the Fathers, in finding out the true sense of the Scriptures in disputed cases. Now as to this, I was sensible I had not sufficiently explained myself in my first letter, and therefore in my second letter, I endeavored to explain myself in such a manner as, I tho't, ill-will itself could not misrepresent. My principle, as I then explained it, was to this effect, "That I take the H. Scriptures for the only rule of my faith and practice, which is the great fundamental principle of the Church of England: but inasmuch as every sect of Christianity do also pretend to the Scriptures as their rule; and there are several texts, especially respecting the external polity of the church, that are differently understood by different sects: I judged the safest and most undoubted way to ascertain the meaning of those texts, after all the light we could get from the Scriptures themselves, was to appeal to the facts and practices that universally obtained in the church, immediately after Scripture-times, and so downwards thro' the first and purest ages, and to the Fathers who lived in those times, only as witnesses what those facts really were." This method I found our dissenting brethren themselves took, and that very justly, to establish the first-day Sabbath and infant baptism, which they esteem as much fundamentals as we do Episcopacy; and therefore they must either allow our method of reasoning to be good, or own that they are inconsistent with themselves.

Now this stating of the case Mr. Phileleuth. takes little, or no notice of in his reply, and leaves his friend miserably helpless where he most needed his help; and one would think, by his neglect of him in this affair, that he was willing to sacrifice infant-baptism, and the first-day Sabbath themselves, so that he might but destroy Episcopacy with them. All this he artfully conceals and keeps out of sight, and instead of attending to it, as he ought to have done, in faithfulness to his friend, and his own side; and notwithstanding that I had abundantly cleared myself from such an imputation; he would still invidiously have it believed, p. 72, that I join with the papists in setting up tradition as a rule of my faith, in conjunction with the Scriptures, and makes a great show with many large quotations, not only from Chillingworth, but also from Bishop Jewel, Bishop Hall, Archbishop Tillotson, etc., as tho' they condemned my way of reasoning; whereas (however some few passages

may carry a different sound with them, yet) in the whole, what they contend for is not at all inconsistent with it; so far from this, that their reasoning against the Roman Catholics, is, in many instances upon the same foot with mine against the Presbyterians, who are both alike condemned by the facts of the primitive church. But as to the passages he quotes, let the impartial inquirer examine them in the authors themselves, and compare them with what I plead, and he will readily see the difference. They were pleading against the corruptions and innovations of the Church of Rome, which were introduced some hundreds of years after the apostles; whereas I was pleading for a practice universally obtaining from their days: they were pleading against the authority of Fathers that lived after the introduction of those innovations, and of writings of uncertain authority; whereas I was pleading from the authority of the Fathers who lived in the apostolic age, and the two next ages after them: they were pleading against the authority of the pretended oral or unwritten traditions of the Church of Rome, *i. e.*, against things which the Roman Catholics pretended, were, for several ages, handed down from age to age, by word of mouth, for which they could produce no written tradition at all; whereas I was pleading from the authority of what was written and recorded by very many, and those the most faithful witnesses of antiquity, of different countries, nations and languages, yet all conspiring in attestation to the same facts. The R. Catholics pretend to have traditionary interpretations of Scripture so handed down, to justify what they hold, which I do with Chillingworth and Tillotson disclaim, and with them do appeal to open universal facts attested to by the Fathers, as being what were obvious to every man's senses, nor do I argue from any facts universally obtaining in any one age alone, which, I deny not but that they might be contrary to facts as generally obtaining in another age; but I argue from facts that obtained in every age, from the beginning of Christianity? How disingenuously then does this gentleman deal, in pretending those authors were at all against me, and when he knows they were in the same sentiment with me, on the subject now under debate?

My adversary had written very contemptuously of the Fathers, and their authority and usefulness. This I tho't it necessary to animadvert upon, as tending to favor the cause of infidelity, by weakening, if not destroying the external evidence of the Canon of

the New Testament, which can no otherwise be established but by the testimony of the Fathers, who are likewise witnesses to Episcopacy. And truly after all that this gentleman has said, on this head, I should be glad to be made sensible that the case is otherwise. Does it not weaken the common cause of Christianity to weaken any one of the evidences of it? Is not the testimony of the earliest Christian writers to the apostolical authority of the several books of the New Testament, a mighty evidence of their being genuine? And are they not the same men who are witnesses to their apostolic original, and their being universally received as such, that are also witnesses to the apostolic original of Episcopacy and its universal reception? Does not therefore the weakening their credibility with respect to the one, weaken it also with regard to the other? If the Scriptures were translated into divers languages, and dispersed throughout all countries, did not Episcopacy go everywhere with them? If the Scriptures were handed down from age to age, was not Episcopacy handed down with them? Nay were they not bishops that handed them down, and spread them abroad successively, with the successive communication of their own order? They received the Holy Books at first from the apostles, with their orders, and conveyed them to others successively, with the same orders. And whatever this gentleman or others may pretend against a succession of bishops, can he or they find one age or nation of Christendom, without bishops, till of late, or wherein a successive ordination or consecration by imposition of hands was not practiced and held necessary for conveying that character? If there have been some irregularities in the manner, must they destroy the essence of the thing? And if in any particular church the succession may have failed, did it therefore, or could it, fail in the whole? If God's providence was engaged for the preservation of the Scriptures, was it not also engaged to preserve a true succession of those who were to convey them down, and to explain and enforce them, and to be always with them to the end of the world?

He slyly, and most abusively insinuates, p. 86, and 92, as tho' my reasoning on this head was slyly libelling Christianity and abusing the Bible. But pray, is it libelling Christianity to be solicitous to prove its divine original, and not to be mistaken about it, or anything relating to it, and to be tender of, and do justice to the character and reputation of those who have transmitted it

down to us? Is it abusing the Bible to prove the several books of it to have been received from inspired men, and to have been always handed down as such, by the same witnesses who attest to the fact of Episcopacy in their times, and that it was originally derived from the apostles; and to prove to my self and others that I am not mistaken in my notion of Scripture facts, by appealling to the facts immediately after Scripture times and downwards, as attested to by those very men who are witnesses for the apostolical original of those sacred books? This sure is so far from abusing Scripture, that I can't but think it the greatest honor we can do it, next to governing our lives by it, to establish all the evidences of it in the best manner we can, to be solicitous rightly to understand it, and to reverence the characters, and honor the memory, and to pay a great deference to the testimony of those holy martyrs who attest to its divine original, and those facts afterwards that are so highly useful to lead us to the right understanding of it. And this is all I can be justly charged with. Nor were my concessions concerning them at all inconsistent with this, were they but considered with the least candor. On the other hand, I can't but be still of opinion, that to asperse and deride them, as my adversary had done, does really, so far forth as the external evidence of the Canon of those holy books is concerned, greatly tend to the disadvantage of our common cause, and to serve the cause of infidelity. And by the way, I cannot help saying on this occasion, that it is an unaccountable thing to me, and a sad instance of the force of prejudice, that our brethren in this country, should be so intent upon opposing the Church of England, that they scruple not, in order to disgrace her among the people, to reprint, recommend, and scatter about pamphlets that have been written by infidels at home, with a design to bring all religion into contempt, and to stab the Gospel thro' the sides of the church; such was Parson Alberoni; such were Trenchard's lucubrations, and such the pamphlets recommended by this gentleman, p. 51, at least one of them. Nay some have, to my knowledge recommended Tindal's book of *The Rights. etc.* (not to mention Chubb's Latitudinarian pieces, who has lately declared himself on the infidel side, with Tindal, for the sufficiency of reason without revelation.) Wretches these! Who care not how much they belie, abuse and misrepresent the church, so that they may but by that means bring all religion into contempt. With what conscience could my brother Phil. recommend such vile pamphlets as that addressed

to Sir Nathanael Curzon, when he can't but know that it is stuffed with most notorious falsehoods, such as these, "That the bishops give licences to mid-wives to baptize, and to men to keep two wives, to commit adultery, to practice knavery, and to communicate with the Church of Rome," etc. Many more I might mention. What do you mean, my brethren, in taking such courses as these to blacken the church? Can you be insensible that these men are as really enemies to you as to us, and that they equally design the ruin of us all? I am mistaken if you are not in the event made sadly sensible of your error, in taking such methods to render the church odious. Do you not see loose notions in religion, and even infidelity coming in apace among us? Ought you not therefore in faithfulness to the Gospel and yourselves, to join with us against the common enemy?

But to go on, — this gentleman, p. 91, suggests as tho' I insinuated that the divinity of Christ was doubtful, because I mentioned it with Episcopacy, as an instance wherein the matters of fact attested by the Fathers, are highly useful to satisfy us, that we take up a right notion of the Scripture-sense. Now, why should this be invidiously represented, as tho' I doubted whether the divinity of Christ was plainly taught in Scripture? He knows I was not speaking of either the one or the other, as being doubtful to me, but as being disputed, and consequently doubted by others. He is not ignorant that there are those that notwithstanding the plainness of Scripture, pretend to doubt, whether the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father be a Scripture doctrine? And to satisfy them in this matter, I say it is highly useful to appeal to the testimony of the Fathers, whether that was constantly taught from the beginning as a Scripture doctrine or not? The same I say with respect to Episcopacy, it appears to me not doubtful but sufficiently plain from Scripture, to be an apostolical institution; but since there are those that doubt and dispute it, I plead, that the consequent facts ought, in all reason, to satisfy, any one that it was so.

But he says, supposing the fact of Episcopacy ever so well attested, "He that argues from fact to right is a mere Sophister." p. 80. I allow this in all other facts but such as are done under the infallible conduct of the unerring Spirit of God; but in this case we may undoubtedly argue from fact to right. The apostles did, in fact, wherever they propagated Christianity, institute Episcopacy; we therefore justly conclude, that form of government, and that only, to be right, and that it is our bounden duty to submit to

it, and that it ought to be continued in all churches to the end of the world. Is this sophistry? No sure, there can be no danger of erring in arguing thus. The only question then is, whether the apostles did in fact institute Episcopacy? We think it plain from Scripture, that they did, in the persons of Timothy, Titus, and the Angels of the seven churches; and we are well assured that we are not mistaken, since we find it so clearly attested by the Fathers, Clemens, Ignatius, Irenæus, Tertullian and Cyprian, which I quoted, besides many others, within the three first centuries successively, that I might have mentioned, and which have often over and over been alleged, that the apostles did every where institute Episcopacy, in our sense of it. Nay Mr. Chillingworth (whom he so basely misrepresents, and so emptily triumphs in) says, in the margin of his demonstration, that "Dr. Hammond has fully demonstrated it, in his Dissertations against Blondel (which, says he, never were answered, and never will) by the testimonies of those, who wrote in the very next ages after the apostles," not to mention Molineus's, Beza's, Chamier's and Vedelius's concessions, on which he builds his demonstration. But of the facts themselves, I shall say more afterwards.

His grand objection against my way of arguing is taken from the Chiliast notion of Christ's personal reign on earth, and the communicating of infants. These, he pleads were universal facts of the primitive church, and we may as well, argue the right of them, as of Episcopacy, from the same reason. To all which, I answer, first, supposing the case to be as he represents it, his friend Elutherius was impertinent in appealing with so much assurance to the universal fact of infant-baptism in those days in proof of its divine institution. And you must never hereafter pretend to argue from the Fathers, but be confined to Scripture alone in proving that and the first-day Sabbath, in both which cases, your adversaries will perhaps be even with you, at least, if antiquity be not taken into the account. But, secondly, the instances of the Chiliast opinion and communicating of infants, are not in any measure upon a par with Episcopacy: for, first, as to the communicating of infants, I cannot find that there is any one Father within the three first centuries that ever pretended they had that practice from the apostles. Nay, I am persuaded it cannot be made appear to be universal matter of fact within the 2 first centuries. There are indeed two passages, one in Dionysius the pretended Areopagite,

and another in the Clementine Constitutions, which are both writings of very dubious authority, that seem to allude to such a custom's obtaining in their time, and there is a passage or two in St. Cyprian that seem to imply as much: I say these three instances, and two of them of very doubtful authority, are all that I can find concerning this custom within the 3 first centuries; and will this gentleman pretend communicating infants is proved to be equally early, and universal matter of fact with Episcopacy, and equally derived from the apostles? What partiality is here? I deny not that it was practised in Africa in St. Cyprian's time, and so was rebaptising heretics, which last mentioned practice, tho' it obtained there, was contrary to the general practice of the church; and so might the former for ought that appears to the contrary. It is confessed, that this practice did at length, by degrees universally obtain in the church, and in St. Austin's time, in the beginning of the 5th century, it was (as several other irregularities were, that had crept into the Church by that time) pretended to have been derived down by tradition from the apostles, but there does not appear to have been any manner of foundation for such a pretense. What then is this to the case of Episcopacy, which had been constantly mentioned in every age from the very beginning as derived from the apostles? And I am free to own that if this practice could be made appear as evidently to have been derived from the apostles, as Episcopacy, I should have the like veneration for it as I have for that, especially, provided also there were as good grounds for it in the Scriptures as there are for that: whereas there does not appear to be any grounds at all.

Now, secondly, as to the Chiliast opinion, it consisted only in adhering too strictly to the letter of that passage in the 20th of Revelations, concerning the Saints reigning with Christ a 1000 years. This notion, I own, did get considerable footing in the church in the second and third centuries; but it took it's rise from the single testimony of Papias, an honest, but weak man, who pretended he had it from St. John, as the true sense of that passage in the Revelations, in which it is easy to imagine he might be mistaken: but it does not appear to have been ever the universal belief of the church. It is true, Mr. Chilingworth and Archbishop Tillotson do make use of it against the Papists, and speak of it as being generally received: but Dr. Whitby, since, in his treatise of the millennium, has, I think effectually confuted the arguments they

use, and made it sufficiently appear, from even Justin Martyr and Irenæus themselves, who were Chiliasts, and from Origen, that it never was the universal doctrine of the church. For brevity I omit his arguments, and beg the reader to consult Dr. Whitby in that treatise, where I think he cannot fail of receiving satisfaction in this point. Upon the whole, I cannot see, that either our cause, or my way of reasoning in defence of it, are at all endangered by what this gentleman argues from that practice of communicating infants, or this opinion of the Chiliasts. They do by no means appear to be parallel instances with Episcopacy: all his boasting therefore on this head is utterly empty and vain.

And now we are come to the stating of the question; in order to which I had made this observation, as being what I judged just in itself, as well as a necessary means in order to prevent contending about words, *viz.*, that there is no more arguing from the promiscuous use of the words bishop and presbyter, to prove them the same order, than from the promiscuous use of the words apostle, presbyter, and deacon to prove them to be the same order. Now I can see little else but mere cavilling in all that is said on this head. I readily allow the word deacon, when applied to the apostle, Eph. 3, 5, etc., is not used in a restrained sense to signify the office so called, but it is evidently so far restrained as to signify the ministerial office in general; for he is there speaking of the ministry of the Gospel, whereof, says he, I am made a minister; and therefore what I contend for is, that as the word deacon or minister does not always signify a particular office in the ministry, so neither can the word bishop be necessarily supposed to signify a particular office. And that therefore a presbyter is an overseer or bishop, only in the same sense as an apostle is a minister or deacon; those terms being always restrained to the ministry in general, tho' not always to any particular office of it. And the apostle Peter calls himself a presbyter, 1 Pet. 5, 1, as what was implied in his apostleship, tho' not therefore implying all that his apostleship did imply. So that what I plead is, that it is plain, and nothing can be plainer, than that these words being all frequently used in a general sense in the New Testament, there is no certain arguing from them to the more restrained sense in which they were used afterwards; and that therefore we ought to leave off arguing from the promiscuous use of words, and to be determined wholly by facts. Accordingly I

stated the question between us to be this, whether the apostles did not appoint in each church, a president or governor superior to, and with jurisdiction over the presbyters and deasons, who were officers of that church, as well as the people under them? And here I must own, it was a vain attempt for me to endeavor by words to fix any one of this gentleman's sceptical humor. One might as well undertake to fix Proteus himself to one particular shape: for tho' I believe there is nobody that had a mind to understand another, and that was not resolved to indulge a mere strife about words, but would readily enough comprehend my meaning; yet Mr. Phileleuth. notwithstanding he himself owns with me that we should wholly leave contending about terms, p. 101, etc., and professes he desires to understand, and hates and scorns a mere strife of words, is sadly puzzled to understand me, and spends no less than five pages, here, besides many more elsewhere in carping and quibbling upon the words of the question as I have stated it. And I must again explain what I mean by a church? And what I mean by a governor or president of it, etc.? Tho' I had sufficiently explained myself on all these points before.

Now as to the first, it is plain to me from Scripture and antiquity, that by a particular church was ordinarily meant all the Christians of a city, with the adjacent country depending on it, even tho' they consisted of many congregations; as I proved they generally did, even in the most primitive times: I have owned that it was many years before any parochial bounds were fixed to the several congregations, this being merely a circumstantial thing. In this sense I showed, we must unavoidably understand the churches of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Smyrna, and the rest of the Scripture churches. I deny not but the word church may sometimes in Scripture mean a particular congregation, as when we read of a church in a house, Rom. 16, 5, and so it might possibly mean in the text he mentions, 1 Cor. 14, 34, of women speaking in the churches; tho' it seems to me more probable this ought to be understood of the places of worship, like that, Chap. 11, 22, "have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?" *i. e.*, the place dedicated to his worship. This instance therefore of the churches of Corinth that he brings, is so far from weakening, that it confirms what I contend for, *viz.*, that in the same particular church, there were several congregations and places of worship, while yet they

were all called but one church, as this church is itself styled, Chap. 1., of each Epistle, the church that is at Corinth. According, therefore, to the Scripture style, we should not say the churches of Boston, but the church of Boston, notwithstanding there are many congregations and places of worship, which should all be united under one head as the congregations of each church in the primitive times were, which tho' they might be sometimes called churches, as we now-a-days call the places of worship, and particular congregations, churches (meaning parish-churches), yet it is evident, from this very instance, that they were all in Scripture-times called one church, meaning a particular church, consisting of several congregations, under the care of so many presbyters, all united under one principal fixed person, at the head of them; as the presbyters of the church of Ephesus (whereof there were several, Acts 20. 17.) were united under Timothy, and afterwards under the Angel of that church.

I say ordinarily all the Christians of one city and country adjacent, were a particular church, and but one bishop presided over each of them: not that this was ever reckoned a necessary rule, but what was judged most for the public advantage always governed: hence when two cities were very near each other, they were united together under one bishop; and on the other hand, when there was a large country without any city in it, it was divided into several districts, like counties, the chief town of which was the bishop's seat. Thus in England, London and Westminster, being near each other, make one bishopric, and Bath and Wells another, and Litchfield and Coventry another; otherwise there are just as many particular churches and bishops in England, as there are cities, according to the primitive model, and some large countries had formerly suffragans, of the same kind with the ancient *Chorepiscopi* or country bishops, and it would perhaps, be well if they were restored. However, as things are, the number of bishops in England is so considerable, for so small a spot of ground, that I think there is little occasion for complaint. As to Mr. Phileleuth's ill-natured flouts, and unmannerly, indecent reflections in p. 107, 8, 9, and 123, as well as many other places, I take no notice of them: it is sufficient to pass them by with pity and contempt.

And as to the government of each particular church, tho' he pretends to be so much at a loss for my meaning, he knows well enough, that what we contend for, is, that this is, and was always

deemed to be essential to Episcopacy, that in each district, be it a city, with its adjacent country, or chief town with its country, there be one chief head or governor, ordained to that office, who has such a presidency over the rest of the clergy, and the people under them, as well as him, and in subordination to him, as may be properly called, a jurisdiction, not legislative but executive, not despotic and abitrary, but limited by laws which he may not dispense with, nor may he any more transgress them than the meanest presbyter. And this was always the same in the church, whatever irregularities and exorbitances there may have been in some places and times, and whatever accidental alterations there have been, are, and lawfully may be: on account of which it is a mean artifice of our adversaries, when we prove that such a person was always from the beginning at the head of the clergy in each church, to cry out, O, but those ancient bishops were not of the same kind with our modern bishops. Why truly, we don't pretend that they were lords, or had many other temporal privileges which Christian kings and princes have since granted to bishops, or that there was always one precise method in their public administrations; notwithstanding these, and the like purely circumstantial differences, we insist upon it that our bishops are now of the same kind with those ancient bishops, as to what was always essential to their office and character, be they called prelates, presidents, governors, moderators, or what they will.

Another quibble that runs thro' this gentleman's performance, is, that those primitive bishops were not of a different order from the presbyters. To this I answer, that to me it seems a mere strife about words to object against calling them distinct orders. However, if that would please him, I should find no fault with Mr. Hooker's account of the different orders, which he himself quotes, p. 47, "That the clergy be divided into two orders, presbyters and deacons, and that of presbyters, some be greater, some less in power, and that by our Savior's own appointment." Thus the whole clergy of the Jewish church were Priests and Levites, but the High Priest was nevertheless, by divine appointment, superior to the other priests. Let the bishop be a presbyter if you please, according to this way of stating the case: the gentleman it seems likes a dichotomy better than a trichotomy, let him have his humor, so that the truth of things be not infringed. The reason why we call the bishop of a different order from the presbyter is because he is, and

always was consecrated or ordained to that superiority of station and office, in solemn manner, by imposition of the hands, either of the apostles at first, as Timothy by Paul. 2 Ep. 1. 6, or of other bishops afterwards, as is plain from many passages in antiquity (*vid.* Bingham's *Origines*). And for this reason deans and arch-deacons which he mentions, p. 58, are not different orders, but of the same order with the rest of the presbyters, because they have no distinct ordination from the rest, as bishops have, and as arch-bishops likewise have not from the other bishops, being both the one and the other, only *primi inter pares, i. e.*, chief men of the same order with the rest of their brethren, only appointed to particular business of more especial weight and trust.

Upon the whole therefore, what we plead for is only this, that according to the primitive model, every nation or province be divided into several districts, consisting of a convenient number of congregations, each immediately under the care of their several presbyters, and all united under one principal person at the head of them: such as those were, whom the apostles at first ordained, one in each city, wherever they propagated Christianity, and who by the end of the first, or beginning of the second century, began to be distinguished from the rest of the clergy by the name bishop, whose fixed business it was, and to which he was ordained, to preside authoritatively in ordination and government, in such a manner, that nothing might be regularly done by the clergy, without him at the head of them. This I say, is what we plead for, and for this we appeal to the facts of the Holy Scriptures, and the most primitive churches. Thus, in fact the church of Ephesus with its presbytery and people were under the government of Timothy, and that of Crete under the government of Titus, as is plain from the Epistles to them, and the seven churches of Asia with their presbyters and people, were under the government of their seven Angels, as appears from the second and third Chapters of the *Revelation.*

Now, as to Timothy and Titus, this gentleman contends that they had, one the care of all Asia, and the other of all the cities in Crete, and therefore they could not be fixed bishops of particular churches: as if these were inconsistent the one with the other. They might have, and, if we will believe the testimony of the ancients, they had a primacy and general inspection over the bishops, and all the churches in those parts, tho' they had a par-

ticular fixed jurisdiction each one in his own particular church: Timothy had manifestly a jurisdiction over the particular church of Ephesus, as appears from the Epistles to him; and all that Theodoret's testimony can reasonably be supposed to imply is that he had a primacy and general inspection with regard to the rest of the churches of Asia, each of which had its Angel or bishop besides, as is clear from St. John's Epistles to them, Rev. 2. & 3. And where, I beseech you, is the inconsistency of supposing a succession of such fixed governors of Ephesus, and the rest of the churches of Asia, as in fact there was, and St. John's settling at Ephesus in the decline of life (which he makes such ado about) not to preside over them as a fixed governor of any particular church or province, but to complete the settlement of Christianity in the world, to receive revelations from God and communicate them, to finish and settle the Canon of Holy Scripture, and to direct, reprove, instruct and exhort the churches, and all in the quality of an apostle? Such arguing as he has upon this head, is very trifling.

And as to Titus, where is the inconsistency of calling all the Christians of Crete a church at first, and yet supposing, as from the nature of things we unavoidably must, that upon the increase of Christianity there, there might be a particular settled church in each city, with each one its bishop and presbytery: and that then Titus, who had before been bishop of the church of Crete, might now be more properly styled (as Dorotheus calls him) a bishop in Crete, *i. e.*, in one of the cities of that island, with a primacy respecting the other bishops? There is no inconsistency in all this with what I plead for; and this supposition renders the testimonies of the ancients all consistent with one another. He brings a passage out of Dr. Whitby against me, who says, "He cannot find in any writer of the three first centuries, any intimation, that Timothy and Titus were fixed bishops." But does not the gentleman deal very unfairly in leaving the matter thus, when Dr. Whitby's next words are, "That this defect is abundantly supplied by the concurrent suffrages of the 4th and 5th centuries?" And does he not next quote Eusebius (who indeed lived in the third century) and who says, "it was delivered down to them by history, that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete." From whence it is manifest, tho' those histories are now lost, that such were then extant; and the Doctor quotes many others that attest to the same fact. It is true, Dr. Whitby has a conjecture that is almost peculiar to

himself, and which I don't see to be sufficiently supported by the reasons he gives; however, afterwards he abundantly proves Timothy and Titus to have been truly bishops, tho' he is somewhat doubtful about their having a fixed charge in any particular church; and that Episcopacy was truly an apostolical constitution, he demonstrates in a most unanswerable manner in that preface to the Epistle to Titus, where among other instances he mentions the Angels of the 7 churches as undoubted bishops, and says, "There can be no stronger proof of such a matter of fact, than the general and concurrent practice of the Christian church in the ages next succeeding the apostles; and this general sense of the Christian church may be demonstrated." And then goes on with his demonstration, and among others he alleges the arguments of Bishop Stillingfleet as unanswerable, whom, Mr. Phileleuth. still vainly pretends is on his side of the question: where he has these remarkable words in his *Dut. and Rights of the Paroch. Clergy,* p. 11. "They who go about to unbishop Timothy and Titus, may as well unscripture the Epistles written to them, and make them only some occasional writings, as they make Timothy and Titus to have been some particular occasional officers. And we have no greater assurance that these Epistles were written by St. Paul, than we have that there were bishops to succeed the apostles in the care and government of the churches." Thus you see how much reason he has to boast of Whitby and Stillingfleet. And lastly, as to the argument for Episcopacy from the Angels of the seven churches of Asia, what he says in answer to it, does not, as far as I can see, in the least weaken it. Nay he owns, p. 127, the main of what we contend for from it, *viz.*, "That they might be so many distinct fixed persons, presiding over the rest of the clergy as well as people, in each of those churches." Only he pretends this don't prove them to be of a different and superior order: to which I need say no more than what I have already said, only I think it is plain enough, that, even in governments, ever so well balanced and limited, the distinction between governors and governed, is sufficient to denominate them of different orders.

Next to these facts of the Holy Scripture, we appeal to the facts of the most primitive churches, by which we ascertain our selves that we are right in our notion of Scripture facts. And here the gentleman pretends to be mightily astonished at my assurance in saying; "I cannot see how it can be doubted, but that we have the

universal witness of the church of God, in every place, and every age of the ancient times of Christianity, even from the beginning, entirely on our side of the question." Now by the universal witness of the primitive church here, and the general suffrage of antiquity, I mean, that all the writers of the primitive church, that have any occasion to mention the government of the church, either in their times or before, do constantly and unanimously attest to, or, at least suppose it to be such an Episcopacy, as we plead for, as to the essentials of it, and that none ever speak a syllable of any other form of government. This I can't but still take to be the case: nor can I conceive how any one that impartially reads Bishop Potter's *Church Government*, Mr. Slater's *Original Draught*, Mr. Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticae* (not to mention many other modern authors) together with the ancients themselves. St. Ignatius, Irenæus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, and many others of the Fathers, can make any doubt of it. I am sure, I can no more doubt of it, than I can, from reading the ancient Greek and Roman authors, what the form of civil government was which obtained in their countries and times. Sir E. Deering (tho' no friend to the English Constitution) in his collection of speeches, has these words, "They who deny that ever any such bishops (*i. e.*, bishops presiding over presbyters) were in the best and purest times, I intreat them to shew me how I may prove that there ever was an Alexander, a Julius Cæsar, or a William the Conqueror: To me as plain it is that bishops president have been the constant permanent governors of the church of God in all ages. Therefore," says he, "answer not me, but answer Ignatius answer Clemens, Tertullian, Irenæus, nay answer the whole indisputed concurrence of the Asian, the European, and the African churches, all ages, all places, all persons. Answer, I say, all these, or do as I do, submit to the sufficient evidence of truth." Grotius who was willing to say the best he could of the Presbyterian scheme, does however declare, *De Imp. Sum. Pot.* "That Episcopacy had its beginning in the apostolical times, this is testified by the catalogues of bishops left us by Irenæus, Eusebius, Socrates, Theodoret and others, who all begin from the apostolical age. But to detract from the faith of such writers, and so agreeable to one another, is the part only of an irreverend and obstinate mind." And he produces many testimonies, and among others, says, "The seven Angels of the Asiatic churches in the *Revelation* are an irrefragable argument to this assertion." See

more at large in Dr. Brett of *Church-Government*, p. 83. etc. Now whoever knows the characters of these two great men, will be sensible that nothing but the force of truth could have extorted such declarations from them.

I assure you I meant nothing like railing or uncharitableness in what I said, however that hard construction must uncharitably be put upon it. But I should be glad any one would tell me, in what church, or in what age this Episcopal form of government did not obtain? And where or when, it would not undoubtedly have been judged censurable for any one to dispute against, and set up in opposition to it? Those that did so, we find were in fact censured, and what else could others have expected? To these things my brother Phil. has nothing to say: why then should he be so terribly amazed? Episcopacy was not among those things that Mr. Chillingworth judged unwritten and unnecessary, for he held and proved it to be apostolical; why then should he be brought in as censuring my expressions: I must still think such a management to be fallacious.

It is not worth the while for this gentleman and I to enter into a particular debate upon the testimony of the Fathers, concerning the matters of fact relating to the controversy before us; because it has been so often done to our hands already. The ingenious author of *The Inquiry into the Constitution, etc., of the Primitive Church.* had done the best that the nature of the thing would admit of, in endeavoring to support the Presbyterian and Congregational pretenses from the facts of the primitive church. To which Mr. Slater gave a distinct and complete answer in his *Original Draught of the Primitive Church*, with which that ingenious gentleman, the Inquirer (as I have been told by good hands) owned himself fully satisfied, and that his book was sufficiently answered, nor would he be persuaded to attempt any reply. Let those who are, without partiality and without hypocrisy, desirous of finding the truth, read those books, and the others I mentioned above, and judge for themselves. And I would hope no body would be so disingenuous as to bring over again the testimonies by which the Inquirer endeavored to support his hypothesis, without taking notice of Mr. Slater's remarks and replies. When I see his *Original Draught* fairly and justly answered, with the same Christian temper, and the same integrity, wherewith he wrote it, then, and not till then, shall I begin to think our cause in some danger. In the mean time I can't

but express my surprise on this occasion, that the gentleman I have to deal with, after having read these books (as he pretends to have read them for he quotes the *Orig. Draught*, p. 15.) should yet have the face to impose upon ignorant people with such fallacious misrepresentations of authors as his remarks are, upon the authorities I produced. Verily he, and whoever goes with him into such management, "must have backs of steel, as well as faces of brass" (if I may for once in a way give him back his own words) to stand it out against Mr. Slater's mighty reasoning. I will make two or three remarks on his misrepresentations of the Fathers I quoted, and so conclude.

I had observed that Ignatius, who first wrote after the apostles, A.D. 107. (for so it should be according to Dupin) mentions the 3 orders under the 3 distinct names, bishop, presbyter and deacon, no less than 16 times, and requires the presbyters and deacons as well as people, to be subject to them. Now, Mr. Phileleuth, to invalidate this, argues, that the words bishop and presbyter do not, in Ignatius, signify different orders, because I allowed they did not in St. Clement's time, and to establish this conclusion, he pleads that St. Clement must have written his Epistle but a little time before Ignatius. To this I answer, that Mr. Wooton and Archbishop Wake have proved that Clement wrote his Epistles at least nigh 40 years before Ignatius; for that it appears from the Epistle itself, that it was written just after the persecution under Nero, which was A. D. 65, because he speaks, *c.* 5, of St. Peter and St. Paul as having been lately martyred; and that it must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was A.D. 70 because he speaks of the temple and its services as still continuing. These and other arguments they use, advance a very strong probability, at least, that the date of this Epistle must be whereabouts I placed it: and consequently there must have been time enough for the first governors of the church, who at first were called apostles, as being fellow-laborers with, and successors to the Twelve, by degrees to drop that name, as Theodoret and others testify, out of respect to the Twelve, and to be generally distinguished by the name bishop.

However it is abundantly clear from Ignatius's Epistles, that his bishops were sufficiently distinguished from his presbyters to be called a distinct order. That they had a distinct ordination, as bishops cannot be reasonably doubted, since all accounts extant

from the beginning do constantly, without exception, speak of bishops as being ordained to their office by imposition of hands. The oldest rule of the church extant, among those which Bishop Beveridge proves to have been the rules of the church in the second and third centuries, is, "that a bishop must be ordained by two or three bishops, and a presbyter and deacon by one bishop." *V. Cler. Vad. Mecum.* p. 2, 3. And this cannot be disputed by any one that is versed in St. Cyprian's works: St. Polycarp is by Irenæus, who personally knew him, said to have been ordained by the apostles Bishop of Smyrna, and Ignatius is universally declared to have been ordained by the apostles, Bishop of Antioch, not to mention St. James at Jerusalem, Clemens at Rome, Timothy at Ephesas, Titus at Crete, Mark at Alexandria, and many more which were ordained by the apostles themselves. Now it is clear from Ignatius's Epistles that the bishops of those times (particularly Polycarp) had presbyters under them; and since it is evident from the Holy Scriptures that the apostolic method of ordination was by imposition of hands, it cannot be questioned but that they were so ordained to their office of presiding over and governing the clergy, as well as people of their respective churches. See Bingham, *l.* 2 *c.* 1. That Ignatius's bishops had such a jurisdiction over their presbyters as the English bishops, is clear from *Ep. ad Smyr.* §. 8, which I mentioned before, in which it appears that nothing could lawfully be done without the bishop's approbation or licence: and since it is there manifest that, under his directions, their presbyters did administer baptism and the H. Eucharist or Lord's Supper, as did likewise St. Cyprian's presbyters, Ep. 15, 16, 17. it is little short of right down raving for Anderson, and after him Elutherius, to pretend they were only lay-ruling elders of the Presbyterian kind. And by the way, how shall we reconcile Elutherius and his friend Phileleuth. while one holds Ignatius's presbyters to be lay-elders, and the other to be of the same order with the bishops? So inconsistent are false schemes one with another, as well as with truth! That Ignatius's bishops had the sole power of ordination is manifest, not only from the Canon above mentioned, but also from hence, that there is not one instance to be given, in all antiquity, of any other approved ordinations, but what were performed by bishops, as Mr. Bingham abundantly proves, *l.* 3. *c.* 3. §. 6, and I challenge one instance to be produced. And lastly, that Ignatius held Episcopacy to be fundamental, is clear from many passages,

particularly *Ep. ad Eph.* §. 3, where he says, that "the bishops appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth are by the Will of Jesus Christ." And §. 5. "Let us take heed that we do not set our selves against the bishop that we may be subject to God." And §. 6. "For whomsoever the master of the house sets over his household, we ought in like manner to receive as we would do him that sent him." And he requires the deacons to be subject to the presbyters, and both deacons and presbyters to the bishop according to the will of God.

And now as to St. Cyprian's testimonies, who lived within 150 years of the apostles: I must have the charity to believe, that this gentleman never thoroughly read the works of this Father, or surely he could never go about to mislead people into such a wrong notion of his sense of Episcopacy from the passage he quotes: for nothing can be clearer than that St. Cyprian's notion of Episcopacy, and that which this gentleman pleads for, are utterly diverse from each other: for he would have St. Cyprian's bishop to be nothing but a mere moderator, *i. e.*, to have only a mere primacy, without any proper jurisdiction; whereas it is plain from the passage I quoted, *Ep. 33. Ed. Ox. Lapsis,* "That it is established by the divine law, that every act of the church should be governed by the bishops," and what St. Cyprian in this place alleges that text for, "Thou art Peter," etc., is not to show what respect Peter bore to the other apostles, as having a primacy among them, but that the Apostolate, and consequently the Episcopate as succeeding to it, was first instituted in what Christ there says to him. And in his letters to his presbyters and deacons while he was in banishment, he plainly writes to them in the style, not of a mere moderator, but of a governor, particularly, Ep. 15, 16, 17, or 10, 11, 12, *Ed. Pam.* He chastises some of the presbyters for not considering the honor and obedience they owed to the bishop set over them, in that they had admitted some to the Communion who had fallen, without his having first declared his acceptance of their repentance, as the custom then was, by imposition of hands. It is also plain that he considered the bishops as being of a distinct order from the presbyters, from what Mr. Slater argues in his *Original Draught, viz.*, that St. Cyprian styles the bishops his colleagues, but never gives that appellation to the presbyters. And this distinction is abundantly evident thro'out the whole of his writings. Partic-

ularly I desire the reader to consult, Ep. 21, 22, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 65, 69, 75, as they stand in Pamelius's edition, as well as many other places. In the 35th Ep. he gives his clergy an account of his having ordained Numidicus presbyter, and calls them, "his clergy": and in that, and Ep. 38, he speaks of ecclesiastical promotions as depending on the bishop; can these and the like expressions be reconciled with the character of a modern moderator of a presbytery? In Ep. 39, he tells them "he had suspended or censured such and such persons." In Ep. 69, he says, "The bishops succeed the apostles by vicarious ordination," and calls them "governors of the church," as he also does in the Council of Carthage; and in Ep. 76, he makes a regular "succession from the apostles necessary to a lawful ordination," and the same does Firmilian, Ep. 75. But it would be endless to mention all the passages in St. Cyprian that explain the nature of the Episcopacy of those times, as being manifestly of the kind we plead for. I wish the reader could at least consult these, and that he would readily see how far this gentleman is from giving a fair and just representation of St. Cyprian's sense. Nothing can be more evident from the whole of his conduct with respect to his presbyters, than that he had, and exercised a proper, tho' limited jurisdiction or government over them; and yet this unaccountable gentleman would face down the good old Father and the whole primitive Christian world, that his, and all the ancient Episcopacy was only a mere primacy.

Well, but he undertakes to prove this from St. Cyprian himself; who, in his tract *De unitate Ecclesiae*, makes the primacy of Peter with respect to the rest of the apostles who were of the same order with himself, a pattern for all succeeding bishops. Now as to this, I think it will be plain to whoever will consult that passage, compared with the design of the discourse, and the other passages of his works which I have referred to, that among other arguments for unity, he uses this, that as the apostolate was one, each apostle having the whole authority of the entire apostolate; so the Episcopate which succeeds it, is but one, each bishop having the whole authority of the Episcopate: but as the unity of the Apostolate centered in the primacy of Peter, so he would have the unity of the Episcopate center in the primacy of one in each province, which primacy is mentioned in the 6th Canon of the Council of Nice, as an ancient custom, and as having universally obtained in the church:

See Bishop Fell's *Notes in loc.* And agreeably to this sense of St. Cyprian St. Jerome pleads, "That all bishops have the same power, whether the bishop of Rome or of Eugubium, whether they be great or small, rich or poor, etc. They are all alike successors of the apostles." And yet he would have a primacy among them, as appears from the passage this gentleman refers to. All that can be gathered from the passages, therefore, is, that all bishops are equal, as all the apostles were to whom they succeed; but does it therefore follow, that, according to them, bishops and presbyters are equal? By no means, for they are not speaking a word in those places of presbyters. They would have a primacy in each province among the bishops, as Peter was primate among the apostles: but does it therefore follow that the bishop has only a primacy among the presbyters? No such thing, for neither of them ever speak of presbyters as being the proper successors of the apostles. This gentleman therefore does manifestly pervert the true sense of St. Cyprian and St. Jerome, in understanding them to mean that the ancient bishops had only a primacy with respect to the presbyters, just as St. Peter had with regard to the other apostles: for they are not speaking a syllable in those places of the bishop with respect to his presbytery, but of the bishops among themselves; neither is St. Cyprian there speaking of the unity of a particular church, but of the Catholic church; and maintains, as I have said, that as there is one Apostolate, of which each apostle had the whole power, so there is one Episcopate, of which each bishop has the whole power! Never does he once speak thus of presbyters, tho' he very often mentions them, but ever speaks of them as being distinct from bishops, and inferior and subject to them: but as there was a primacy in the Apostolate; so he frequently speaks of a primacy in the Episcopate in each province, but never does he speak of this in regard to the presbytery. He himself was primate or archbishop of the province of Africa, and presided in the Council of Carthage, in which, beside many presbyters and deacons, there were 87 bishops of that country: on which occasion, he says, "None of us takes upon him to be a bishop of bishops," *i. e.*, to exercise a proper jurisdiction over other bishops: in this consisted the papal usurpation afterwards, turning the primacy into a supremacy, and the spiritual into a worldly dominion. This St. Cyprian disclaims (as did even Gregory the Great, a bishop of Rome, above 300 years after this); but it is evi-

dent from his epistles, that he was at the same time a bishop of presbyters, and did exercise a proper, tho' limited jurisdiction or government over the presbyters, deacons and people of his own particular church of Carthage. And now I appeal to every unprejudiced reader, whether I have not truly and justly represented his sense, and the sense of those primitive times, and consequently whether this gentleman hath not grossly misrepresented it.

The Church of England is formed exactly according to St. Cyprian's model as to all the particulars I have been mentioning. Does he make all the apostles equal in power with St. Peter? So are all our bishops equal in power with the archbishops, except what a mere primacy for order necessarily implies. Had Peter a primacy with respect to the other apostles? So have our archbishops with respect to the other bishops, and as St. Cyprian likewise had with respect to the other bishops of Africa. Did the unity of the primitive church, as to its common polity, center in this primacy? So does the unity of the Church of England. Had St. Cyprian's and Ignatius's bishops each of them presbyters under them, and a limited jurisdiction over the clergy, as well as people, each one in his own church? So have the bishops of England each in his, and only a limited jurisdiction. The bishops of those times alone ordained and so do ours, excepting that the presbyters with us assist in ordaining presbyters, and so they probably did then. Some circumstantial difference there may be, but the substance, or most material points of ecclesiastical government, are the same. Upon the whole, I can truly say, I desire no other kind of bishops than such as were in St. Cyprian's time; and if I did not sincerely think that those of our church were manifestly of the same kind with them, I would immediately drop my pen, and never undertake to plead her cause any more.

But before I finish, I must beg leave to observe, that this gentleman seems, after all, not unwilling to own that the Cyprianic, and even the Ignatian bishops, nay, and even Timothy, Titus and the seven Angels themselves, were at least fixed moderators, pp. 127, 128, 152, and for ought I can see, his argument from St. Peter's primacy must make them fixed by divine appointment. By which I think he must be allowed to grant that the way of these New England churches, and the Scotch Presbyterians, are not conformed to the primitive model, as established by Christ and his apostles;

for it is well known that theirs are only vague moderators, and chosen *pro re nata*. Now seeing he is come so near to us, as not only to allow that those whom we call primitive bishops might be fixed moderators, or fixed presidents, as in fact they were, and seems not to dislike this constitution; methinks it is pity we should differ any longer. Let him only grant two things more, which the primitive model certainly also requires, *viz.*, that these fixed presidents be ordained to their office, with imposition of hands, by those of their own order, and that no act of ordination and government be allowed but under their presidency. Nay, rather than fail, let it be so limited, if he pleases, as that the president shall no more be allowed to do anything of moment without his presbytery, than they without him; I say let these things be granted, and we will be at once united with him, and all be one communion again.

And now to conclude: as to the business of charity, I must think my brother Phil. hath not considered the expressions I used (which he will needs have to be inconsistent with both it and themselves) with that candor and charity he might and ought to have done. For God's sake, my brethren, let us not, for the future, study to put the worst constructions we can on one another's words or actions; but let us rather endeavor to make the best we can of them. Let us not try to magnify and aggravate the differences between us, but rather to make as little of them, and to consider them with as much tenderness, as possible. Let us not dispute which has already most or least charity, but let us strive to see who shall hereafter, really and in fact, most abound in the practice of that heavenly virtue, both towards each other, and towards all men. This is the best course we can take, as far as possible in this imperfect state, to reconcile ourselves to one another, both in judgment and practice; to meet together in truth, and live in peace here, or however to meet at last in that perfect state of truth, and peace, and holiness hereafter, where God and charity alone shall forever reign!

FINIS

A / Third LETTER / From / A Minister of the Church / Of / ENGLAND / To The / DISSENTERS, / Containing / Some Observations on Mr. J. G's. Remarks on / the Second. / *Magna est Veritas et prævalebit.* / Blessed is the Man that — sitteth not in the Seat of the Scornful. Psal. 1. 1. / Boston: / Printed in the Year 1737.

A THIRD LETTER

From a Minister of the Church of England, to the Dissenters.

Dear Brethren,

I told you in the close of my Second Letter, that if Mr. G. thought fit to write again, and would seriously and fairly attend to the real merits of the cause, I would willingly attend him again; but if he was resolved to go on scoffing and reviling, I should endeavor to find some better method of spending my time, than to take any further notice of him. Accordingly in hopes, I suppose, that I would have done with him, and being resolved to have the last word; he has chose not only to go on in his reviling method, but has, if possible, gone a much further length in his injurious and abusive manner of treating us than he did before.

I shall not therefore think it worth my while to write any particular and distinct reply to his remarks; not because there would be any manner of difficulty in confuting every syllable of them; but because there is scarce any thing new of reasoning in them, (nothing indeed worth mentioning but what is sufficiently confuted already, in the very letter which he pretends to answer;) and because the pursuing such a bitter, reflecting, bantering, uncharitable dispute as he has gone into, in the manner it deserves, may rather tend to increase than mitigate that unchristian temper in you towards us, which his management of the controversy has a sad tendency to promote, and which therefore I should rather incline to draw a veil over than to expose. For it is indeed a most melancholy thing in the eyes of all serious Christians, that one who professes himself a minister of the gospel of peace, should at all adventures, give himself up in such an abandoned

manner to excite among Christians a mortal hatred and aversion one towards another.

He says, p. 1, It hath been justly observed, that such as lie in wait to deceive, make it their first work to move the passions of their readers and hearers. In which words he hath unhappily described his own character and practice; for I appeal to you all that read his book (which I believe will be but few) whether he hath aimed at much else than to raise and enflame the passions of his readers, and those of the worst sort, even the passions of anger, malice, hatred, contempt and ill-will, than which nothing can be more scandalous to Christianity.

But tho' I do not design any particular answer to this new scold of his, yet in compassion to some who may otherwise be misled and imposed upon by certain bold assertions and artful insinuations, I have, tho' very much against my own inclinations, been prevailed upon to make a few observations upon his remarks, chiefly with regard to certain pretended facts, which are as directly contrary to truth as darkness is to light. And,

1. The first thing I shall take notice of is, p. 85, 87. wherein he asserts, that I confess some things are unlawful in the Church of England. Now as to this I desire you to read that passage in my second letter, p. 46 and see with your own eyes, which will soon convince you how far Mr. G. is from the least regard to truth: for you will then be sensible that there is not the least ground for that assertion. Read also p. 33. and first letter p. 13. where I challenge him and all the world to prove that there is any thing unlawful in our Church, and p. 35. and many other places there are to the same effect. I allow indeed that unlawful things imposed would be a justifiable reason of separation; but I am far from saying or thinking, and as far is he from proving, that there is any such thing in our Church. And when I say, that was our case: he can't but know, I mean (not that any thing is unlawful in the Church, but,) only that some necessary things were wanting among you which were a justifiable reason for our leaving you.

2. In p. 5, he calls Bohun an honest man and says he is informed he is of our Communion. Now it is certain he can't be an honest man, because he must know that he speaks false in saying, that "Our bishops give licences to midwives to baptize, and to men to have two wives, and to commit adultery and practice knavery" etc. And I have it from a gentleman of great character

and honor in London, that he is reputed an infidel, and consequently of no communion. And when I find fault with some of your ministers for recommending and scattering about that, and others the like abusive books, he knows I don't mean the whole body of them; for I know, and he may know that there are many of them that do abhor such books, and his own among the rest.

3. He charges me, in p. 6, with reflecting on the Father of Spirits, because I say, "He that is not convinced by the mighty reasoning of Hooker and Chillingworth appears to me to have a mind of a very odd make." Now as to this, he knows I am far from thinking that God made his mind so oddly who is not convinced, and that what I mean is, that it seems to me he must, by perversly indulging his prejudices, have made himself obstinate and impregnable against conviction. It is not God that makes men perverse, but they make themselves so.

4. In p. 7, he does in effect charge me with barefaced wilful perjury, because I said "God is my witness and you also," that he had charged me falsely in saying I had repeatedly railed against you either from the press or pulpit. Now as to this, I am content to leave it to your own consciences, and still appeal to you all that have ever known my manner of life, whether any thing has ever been my practice that could justly be charged with railing? And consequently, whether his dreadful charging me at this rate be not unsupportably abusive?

5. In p. *ibid.*, he says, I charge him with excessive rioting, as tho' I meant drinking; when he knows I meant, not drinking excessively, but another sort of riot, even that of malevolent passions and evil-speaking, which you all know to be true. And on this occasion he insinuates as if I were at the head of bonfires and drinking strong drink on the evening of gunpowder treason; when you all know that I never had any concern in those diversions, and that there were at least five of you to one of my people that were present on those occasions, when I cannot understand there ever passed any thing but what was very innocent.

6. In p. 9, he denies that he represented the Church of England in that odious and abusive manner I mentioned, calling it not Christ's Church but the Devil's. Now you all know that ever read them, that he meant the Church in those verses. And I have them to show in his own hand-writing, and I dare appeal to you all whether they can admit of any other construction, and to his own

conscience, both that he was the author of them, and that this was his meaning.

7. In p. 10, he challenges all mankind to show any thing whereby he ever discovered the least disposition or inclination to conform to the English modes of worship and government. Now as to this I have a letter by me in his own hand-writing, that I am ready to show you at any time, which he wrote for one of his parishioners to a gentleman in Boston, wherein, with all the good wishes imaginable for the Church's prosperity and success in this land, that gentleman is desired to send the best books in defence of the worship and government of the Church of England. Now I appeal to you all whether the writer of that letter had not strong inclinations to conformity: tho' we are very thankful that he never did actually conform, since he appears to be a person of such a virulent temper.

8. In p. 12, he says I encouraged a person to preach every Sabbath Day, who confessedly had no power. Now as to this it is far from being true: and that very gentleman himself told the person who inspected the press, upon his inquiry into this matter, that I never directed or encouraged him to preach: and it is very strange that he would let it pass when he knew it to be not true: nor did I ever direct him or any one else to do any thing besides what a mere layman might do, and what the Society that sent me hither, both approves and rewards. As to what Mr. G. himself did, I assure you I had it from one of your own ministers who condemned his proceedings, as being generally esteemed very irregular and inconsistent with your constitution.

9. He says, p. 15, that one of your ministers did undertake to defend his remarks, and did it so roundly that I had little to say; and that I declared, that it is not Episcopal ordination I stand so much upon, and that if I were a Diocesan I should not oblige any that had Presbyterian ordination to be re-ordained. Now as to these articles there is no truth at all in either of them; and I appeal to all that were present at that conversation (and there were several of both persuasions), that that gentleman being once and again urged to defend him, he utterly declined it, and said he had no business to defend Mr. G's notions, or to this effect. And the gentleman himself has since declared to me before sundry evidences, that he never reported me as giving up Episcopal ordination, or saying were I a Diocesan, I would not insist on reordination. So

that Mr. G. is left alone to stand the author of these notorious untruths.

10. On this occasion he says once and again, p. 86, that he is well satisfied we never had Episcopal ordination. Now this is very strange indeed, for when he disputed once with one of our brethren on this subject before several people, that gentleman, to convict him, showed him his letters of orders with the bishop's hand and seal, and he owned it was so. How then can he now say he is well satisfied of the contrary, when he knows otherwise? And because you are made to believe we never were ordained by the bishop with imposition of hands, etc., I do now for your satisfaction solemnly declare, that we were, and are ready to show our letters of ordination at any time; and moreover, that the bishops of England make no account at all of the ordinations we had before.

11. After all that I said in vindication of our discipline, it is really amazing that he should go on in representing things in that utterly wrong and injurious manner he does in pages 26 to 29, and then conclude by saying that we durst not refuse the sacrament to the most openly vicious person that belongs to our communion, if there were any spiritual court at hand; when he knows, and I told you from the express words of the Prayer-Book, that we are expressly ordered to refuse the sacrament to all such, till they openly declare their repentance. And this is our constant practice. And as to the ancient discipline which we lament the want of, it is as much wanting with you, as with us; for pray what open penance is done among you in Lent? which alone is the discipline the Church means, as I showed you before.

12. In p. 38, concerning the barbarous murder of Archbishop Sharp, (which it never was doubted but that it was committed by Presbyterians, and it is expressly asserted by the author that continues Sir Walter Raleigh's History, Vol. 4, p. 150) I say, concerning this murder Mr. G. says, whoever did it, the fact is justifiable on the same foot that Phineas was justified in killing Zimri and Cosbi. O prodigious! Shall an example of zeal inspired by God himself in executing his vengeance upon the vilest idolatry and lewdness, be alleged to justify a barbarous murder? At this rate every wild enthusiast that has the malice and rage to prompt him to it, and the madness to conceit himself inspired in doing it, may be justified in committing what murders he pleases on every one

that he conceits to be in a wrong way? He may plead the example of Phineas as Mr. G. does and all is right. What does this tend to, but to open a door to all manner of violence, to the most execrable murders, and inhuman butcheries imaginable? Upon this principle who could think his life safe? And what mischief might one not look for from the hands of one that would talk at this astonishing rate?

13. In p. 41, he says, the first reformers took the prayers of the Church out of the popish mass-book. Now in this there is a most wretched delusion; for the truth of the matter is this: our Reformers had no regard at all to the popish books as such, but to the Holy Scriptures, and the ancient liturgies of the primitive church, which were used long before the times of popery, from whence some forms of prayer had been continued down through the corrupt times of popery; but surely they were never the worse for having been used by the papists, any more than the Psalms, the Scripture Lessons, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments: the Papists have done no harm to the Psalms and Lessons, etc., by using them; neither for the same reason, could any of those ancient prayers be the less excellent and useful because they had been used by them. And besides these a great part of the prayers of our Church were composed by those holy martyrs and confessors themselves. For this see Sparrow, Comber and Wheatly on the Common Prayer, which I will any time show you.

14. On this occasion, I observe, p. 99, he says, that in the first 300 years there were no stinted liturgies. Now nothing more untrue than this can be asserted; for I can show you in Mr. Bingham's *Origines*, the very forms taken from the apostolical constitutions, which are supposed by him and Bishop Beveridge, and other learned men, to be a collection of the rules and practices that were generally in use within the three first centuries in the Eastern Church; and that many of them were, Mr. Bingham proves beyond all contradiction, from St. Cyprian and others of the Fathers. St. Cyprian says they had one public and common Prayer, *De. Orat. Dom.* And he lived within 150 years of the Apostles. And Ignatius who wrote within seven years of St. John's time, *Ep. ad Magn.*, says, Come all together to the same prayer, let there be one common prayer, etc. Now several of these ancient forms are the same with ours. It is pity but that you should see these things in Mr. Bingham, and particularly I would have you compare and see the

difference between the popish forms and ours, which he would have you believe the same, and which I am ready to show you; you would then see how little truth there is in him.

15. He still goes on saying, p. 99, that the extempore or free way of prayer (as he calls it) is the ancient approved Scripture way, and he cannot find in Scripture that any person ever used forms composed by another. Now as to this, I still challenge him to show one precept or example in Scripture for extempore prayers in public worship. And it is plain as I showed you, that Christ used Psal. 22. 1. on the cross; and Acts 4. 24. the Apostles used a passage out of the 2nd Psalm; and the Psalms which were forms composed by David and others, are expressly required by St. Paul to be used in Christian assemblies, Eph. 5. 9. and Col. 3. 16.

16. In order to show the unlawfulness of authority's interposing in indifferent things, he undertakes to show, p. 70, that there are no human actions that are indifferent. Whereas nothing is clearer both from the nature of things, and in the sense of all divines of any note, than that some human actions are indifferent; and it is evident that to deny lawful authority a right to interpose with respect to such things for the public good, does manifestly destroy all human government in families, church and state. When our Savior says (Matt. 12. 36.) we must give an account of every idle word, it is plain he means not every indifferent word; but every false, vain or rash word, as Dr. Hammond on the place, clearly proves.

N. B. On this subject he has here a deal of idle, unintelligible talk for 20 pages together, which so far as you can make any sense of it, you will find fully answered already in my 2d letter in the places he refers to, and that he takes little or no notice of it, any otherwise than to misrepresent it: I must therefore desire you to read it over carefully again, particularly p. 38.

17. But there is one thing here, I can't but take notice of; and that is, p. 75, where he says, I rob every man of his own personal judgment of discretion; and that I teach that when lawful authority has interposed, every one must sacrifice the peace of his conscience to the peace of the Church. Now this is most notoriously false, for it is directly contrary to what I did teach you in my second letter, p. 40. My words are, "You will say, what, may we not judge for ourselves? I answer, yes, we not only may, but ought to judge for ourselves, and see to it, that there be nothing required of us by au-

thority that is evidently contrary to the Word of God." And he knows that it is not any deliberate reasonable settled judgment of conscience, much less peace of conscience, that I hold it our duty to sacrifice to the public peace, but only little doubts and scruples about things of small moment, as I abundantly show, p. 41, 42. And in this all good casuists agree. See A. Bp. Sharp's *Discourse of Conscience.*

18. I told you that we are not obliged to read one syllable of the Aprocrypha on the Lord's Day. To this he most falsely says (tho' he pretends to have the Calender open before him) that there is no provision made that Aprocryphal Lessons may not be read on the Lord's Day, p. 89, than which nothing can be said more contrary to truth; for there are other Lessons appointed for every Sunday in the year, as he might have seen if he would have opened his eyes. A man might as well look up to the meridian at noon in a clear day, and at the same time insist on it that the sun don't shine. And here he says I would have you believe that we read none but *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*; whereas I never aimed at any such thing, but only mentioned them as such parts as we do read, not that we read no other.

But there is no end of observing to you the many gross untruths and injurious misrepresentations of both the church and me that abound throughout his pamphlet. I might soon collect an hundred at least, and it would be very easy to confute them all; but you may readily see, from those that I have taken notice of, what judgment to make of the rest, and how little credit is to be given him in any thing that he says. The truth is, and I am sorry I am obliged to say it, that of all the writers of controversy I ever read (and I have read a great many) I never found one so full of rancor, so disingenuous, or that had so little regard to the truth and right of things as this man. He little cares what he says, so that he may throw dirt, and raise an odium, and cast a contempt on his antagonist, and bring hatred and ill-will upon us. And I do again heartily pray God to give him repentance and forgiveness.

One thing however I must further take notice of, and that is relating to the predestinarian controversy, p. 123, where he says that the very doctrine which I deny, *i. e.*, absolute personal predestination, is the doctrine of all the foreign reformed churches, and even of the universal Church of Christ. Whereas he can't but know

that it is only Calvin's part of the Reformation that ever taught this doctrine, and those that follow him, and that Luther and Melancthon and the churches that they reformed, which were by far the greater number, ever disclaimed it, except a few rigid people among them; and the Augustan or Augsburg confession, which is the summary of Luther's doctrine, and which was received by his part of the Reformation, has none of this doctrine in it, but what is indeed inconsistent with it. Now this confession is generally received in the whole kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Prussia, in some parts of Poland, and all the Protestant churches of the High Germany, and the doctrine taught in all these churches, according to Luther and Melancthon is, that God decreed to elect to eternal life those who he foresaw would so co-operate with his grace as effectually to repent, believe and persevere in well-doing, and to reject those who he foresaw would abide impenitent in their sins. (*Vid. Appell. Evang. cap.* 4.) And this is the same with St. Paul's and ours, not to mention the whole Greek Church, comprehending a vast body of Christians, and this is agreeable to the doctrine of all the Fathers, and the universal Church of Christ in its purest times, the first 300 years, both eastern and western; and I challenge him to show any of the ancient writers of the primitive church, of any note, down to the days of St. Augustin, that ever taught the doctrine of absolute personal decrees. As to what he quotes from the 9th of Romans, it relates not to the eternal state of particular persons, but to the election or rejection of whole nations and people in this world, whereby they become or cease to be the peculiar covenant people of God, as will plainly appear if you carefully attend to the scope and design of the Apostle's reasoning.

In p. 126, he says he hopes all he has said fully proves that the doctrine of absolute predestination is really the doctrine of the Church of England. I answer, very far from it: all that he has proved is, that a few private men or particular divines of the Church of England, in the latter end of Q. Elizabeths reign, and some part of that of K. James the First, were of that opinion; and pray, who ever denied it? On the other hand, for these (taking in the whole, both at the time of the first reformation, as I showed before, and ever since) there have been, I believe I may say, at least fifty to one of the contrary opinion, who were nevertheless as true churchmen as the others; for neither the one, nor the other

of these opinions were ever yet imposed in our church, as terms either of communion or ordination. There was indeed, as I allowed, a strong party towards the end of Q. Elizabeth's reign, who labored hard to get the Lambeth articles imposed, but were reprimanded for it, and the imposition of them never could be obtained, nor were they ever allowed to be the doctrine of our church. And happy it was for us that they could not gain their ends, for had they been established they would have created such dissension and confusion as would have soon broken the church in pieces. For all these things and many more, let me again beg of you to read Dr. Heylin's history of this controversy, and then you would see the truth of the matter with your own eyes.

Indeed Mr. G. endeavors to invalidate the authority of Dr. Heylin, p. 42, from the testimony of Mr. Pierce, who says he was an author that had no regard to truth. But in answer to this, I would recommend to you the learned Dr. Grey, who in his answer to Pierce (who, by the way, was an abandoned Arian) does abundantly prove in multitudes of instances, that he had no regard to truth. And in reading this book, which you may have of me, you will find a full answer to every thing that Mr. G. here writes against me, which he has, in a great measure collected from the writings of this Mr. Pierce whom Dr. Grey answers. There you will find the stories of Heath and Cummin abundantly confirmed, p. 32, from Strype's *Life of ABp. Parker*, p. 244. Read also Dr. Grey's and Dr. Maddox's answers to Mr. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, who do abundantly convict him and Mr. Pierce of many gross and notorious untruths. And I challenge Mr. G. to show any instances wherein these gentlemen, or Dr. Heylin either, have misrepresented things. No, they never were, and never will be answered.

And now to conclude, let me beseech you in faithfulness to truth, to God and your own souls, to examine carefully both sides of the question, and particularly I beg you will so far do me justice, as to read over faithfully my second letter, together with his pretended answer to it, and then you will see how far it is from being any just answer at all. He says, p. 127, that he has gone through the principal passages, and has not silently passed by any thing worthy of remark. Whereas, if you compare them exactly together, you will find that he has passed by the greatest part, and things of the greatest weight and moment, and that where he does remark, his

remarks mainly consist in scoffing and reviling language, and where he pretends to reason, his way is first most abusively to misrepresent me, and then to fight in the air with his own shadow, and in a dust of his own raising: otherwise there is nothing new, but the same things over and over again, which have been answered a thousand times, and (as I said) even in the letter he pretends to confute, to which therefore as being yet safe and sound I will refer you, intreating you to consider seriously how poor an account you will be able to give of your reading and inquiry, if you do not candidly and impartially read on both sides, and procure all the helps that are offered you for your information, and if you do not lay aside all party affections, and seek after truth and right for their own sakes, and that you may know and do the Will of God, and be saved.

He says, p. *ult.*, if I am silent, he is resolved however to go on writing. Let him go on and welcome, since he knows not how or when to hold his tongue. You see from what I have here laid before you how little regard is due to any thing he says. Let him then, if he pleases, go on scribbling, reviling and scolding to the end of his life. This I am sure of, he will never be able to prove that ours is an unlawful, or unsafe communion on any account, and much less as he asserts, because we have any confusion or difference about the head, the doctrine or modes of worship. For this is a most groundless calumny, like the rest of his odious suggestions. However, I would wish him to consider what a sad thing it would be for him when he has spent his life in this furious manner, to go into the other world enflamed and reaking hot with such a bitter, uncharitable and revengeful spirit as you see his writings do every where abound with, which I do most heartily compassionate, and I pray God to calm his passions and recover him to a truly Christian temper of mind before it be too late! For I shall be heartily glad to see him in Heaven, notwithstanding his abusive treatment of me here on earth.

And I would observe to you, that it infinitely concerns you as you hope for Heaven, to be upon your guard against that malevolent uncharitable temper, so contrary to the Gospel, which his writings tend to inspire you with. For our parts we are resolved to take with patience and meekness all his severe and abusive reflections, and to endeavor to be as little exasperated as possible, being persuaded that his wrath can do us no harm; for as we find that all serious

considerate people, even on your own side, that we can hear speak of it (and they are not a few), are much ashamed to see your cause defended in such a weak, scurrilous, bantering and uncharitable manner, as cannot fail of bringing a great dishonor to it; so we are more and more confirmed in it, that his thus maliciously opposing the Church does greatly tend to promote it. The more he and others like him strive to set you against it, the more they will awaken your attention towards it, and put you upon looking into it and searching the Scriptures with the noble Bereans (Acts 17, 11) to see whether these things are so, at least those of you that are generously disposed to consider things impartially and think and judge for yourselves. And we are well assured that the more you acquaint yourselves with the Church, and seriously attend to it so as to know what it really is, the more you will be reconciled to it and be in love with it, as finding that the truth and original simplicity of the Gospel is indeed with us, and in much greater perfection than with you.

Some of our adversaries have been lately trying to do us all the mischief they can with the Bishop and Society, by false and odious suggestions, whereby they have however really promoted our interest rather than done us any disservice, and only made themselves ridiculous. They have alleged things which they cannot prove, and therefore can expect nothing by any further attempts against us, but to increase their own shame, and involve themselves in greater confusion. No, my brethren, depend upon it, no weapon formed against the Church will ever eventually prosper: God will, in the result of things, bring good out of evil to us, and in the meantime cause all things to work together for our good. He has always done so hitherto, and we trust in his good providence that he ever will, and if God be for us, who shall be against us? Truth is mighty, and under his conduct, it will prevail.

In the meantime, I earnestly pray God to lead you all in the way of truth and holiness, to everlasting happiness, and remain,

Dear brethren,

Your hearty friend,
and faithful servant
in Christ Jesus.

Aug. 21, 1736.

FINIS

Part III

POLEMICS

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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SAMUEL JOHNSON AND HEZEKIAH GOLD

Samuel Johnson to Hezekiah Gold. July 6, 1741.

Sir: —

It is a considerable time ago that I was informed by Mr. Elijah Nicholls that you was pleased in conversation with him to pass these censures upon me, and the church in this town, *viz.*, "That I am not a converted man, nor any of the Church of England people here, nor ever will be." I suppose you mean by means of my ministry. "And that I am a thief and robber of churches, and have no manner of business here." "That my church doors stand open to all mischief and wickedness, and my church is made up of spite and malice, and all manner of mischief is carried on among us every day, and nothing else," or words to this effect, and that you designed to admonish me plainly of these things to my face in a little time. This, Sir, is what I have all this while been in expectation of, but having waited now ever since the beginning of May and heard nothing from you, I thought it my duty to write a few lines to you in the spirit of Christian meekness on this subject. And I assure you I am nothing exasperated at these hard censures, much less will I return them upon you. No Sir! God forbid I should censure you as you censure me! I have not so learned Christ! I will rather use the words of my dear Savior concerning those that censure so, and say, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

As to my having no business here, I will only say that to me it appears most evident that I have as much business here at least as you have, — being appointed by a Society in England incorporated by Royal Charter to provide ministers for the church people in America; nor does his Majesty allow of any establishment here, exclusive of the church, much less of anything that should preclude the Society he has incorporated from providing and sending ministers to the church people in these countries. And as to my being a robber of churches, I appeal to God and all his

people, of both denominations, whether I have ever uncharitably censured you, or said or done anything to disaffect or disunite your people from you, as on many occasions I might have done; on the other hand, whether I have not on all occasions put people upon making the kindest constructions possible upon your proceedings, and whether there has ever been anything in mine or my people's conduct that could be justly interpreted to savor of spite or malice, though we have met with much of it from some of our neighbors.

If any of your people have left you, I appeal to them whether it has been owing to any insinuations of mine, and whether it has not been many times owing to your own conducting otherwise than in prudence you might have done, that they have been led to inquire, and upon inquiring to conform to the church. And pray why have not Dissenters here as much liberty to go to church, if they see good reason for it (as they will soon do if they seriously inquire), as church people to go to meeting if they see fit, as some have done, without my charging you so highly? In short, all I have done which could be the occasion of any people leaving you, has been to vindicate our best of churches from the injurious misrepresentations she has labored under from you and others; and this it was my bounden duty to do. And indeed I shall think myself obliged in conscience to take yet more pains than I have ever yet done, with Dissenters as well as church people, if I see them in danger of being misled by doctrines so contrary to the very truth and spirit of the Gospel as have lately been preached up and down in this country.

And as to my church being open to all wickedness, I appeal to God and all that know me and my proceedings whether I have not as constantly borne witness against all kinds of wickedness as you have, and been as far from patronizing any sort of vice as you have been, and must think my people are generally as serious and virtuous as yours.

And lastly as to your censuring me and my people as being unconverted, etc., I will only beg you to consider whether you act the truly Christian part in thus endeavoring to disaffect my people towards my ministrations, and to weaken and render abortive my endeavors for the good of their souls, when I know not that I have given you any reason to judge me unconverted, — much less to set me out in such a formidable light to them. However, I leave these things, Sir, to your serious consideration, and beg you will

either take an opportunity to converse with me where and when you please, or rather return me a few lines, wherein (as you have judged me unconverted, etc.) I entreat you will plainly give me your reasons why you think me so; for as bad as I am, I hope I am open to conviction, and earnestly desirous not to be mistaken in an affair of so great importance, and the rather because I have not only my own, but many other souls to answer for, whom I shall doubtless mislead if I am misled myself. In compassion, therefore, to them and me, pray be so kind as to give us your reasons why you think us in such a deplorable condition, in hopes of which I remain,

Sir,

Your real well-wisher and humble servant

S. J.

HEZEKIAH GOLD TO SAMUEL JOHNSON. JULY 14, 1741.

I have read and considered your letter and as for the censures you charge me with they are far more than ever came into my thought or out of my mouth, so that either your informer has sadly misrepresented my conversation with him, or you have enlarged the account to justify and blacken the charge. And this confirms me in my former opinion that the interest and increase of your church has been carried on very much by tattling and falsehood. However if I had said as you have heard, the following remarks may satisfy the impartial that I have not much wronged you; to wit, that you are guilty of fishing in troubled waters, and have been very officious in visiting particular persons and families from time to time, that were under disgust with another, or with myself, and by aggravating suggestions on the one side, and fanning insinuations on the other have endeavored to fix their prejudices and to win them over to be your followers, is a matter undoubtedly true and what many witnesses are able to attest; and your frequent practice is a sufficient proof of the point, for many that are now communicants with you, were members of our church, who left us in a very unrulable and disorderly manner (and have justly the heavy charge of covenant-breakers lying upon them). They left us because of some offenses they met with, this is the cloak for their disorder, and is as much as for them to say Christ's cross is offensive to them, and the lighter part of it more than they are willing to endure for his sake; and

hence though they are your disciples, yet they are none of Christ's, as he plainly declared of such in his Gospel, see the tenth of Matthew, 39th vs. He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me, and Luke fourteenth and 27th vs. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me can not be my disciple, and those Christ disowns now, most surely he will reject at the last day. And whereas in saying their prayers with you, they ask God to forgive their trespasses as they forgive those that have trespassed against them, when their practice plainly declares that they have not forgiven them, and what then, good Sir, do they pray for in this petition but that God wont forgive them their offenses against him, but leave them (poor hearts) to bear the guilt and punishment of their own sins, which unquestionably if you encourage them to persist in this way will be their final portion. *cf.* Matthew 14, 15 vs. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Furthermore that there are many scandalous persons that now belong to your church, who left us for no other reason but that they might avoid giving some public testimony of their humiliation and repentance of their notorious crimes, and you have received them and sheltered them in the bosom of your church, and hereby have not only confirmed them in their impenitency and hardened their hearts against the indignities they have done to Christ's name and holy religion, but also have encouraged others to follow them in the like notorious disorders, etc. And that you have taken some offenders into your communion who were under a course of discipline in the churches they belonged to and hereby have prevented the conviction and reformation is real fact; and that both by your printed letters and conversation you have said and done all you possibly could to discredit and undervalue our ministry, suggesting that our ordinations were groundless and unwarrantable, yea that we were usurpers and intruders into the ministerial office, blind guides, and the like bitter censures, pray what was your design in all this but to lead our dear people into an ill opinion of us, to frighten and scare them from us — as though we were most dangerous persons, and were far more likely to lead them to hell than to any better place. Thus have you used all your might to blast both our sacred character and holy ministrations, and to render all our faithful labors for the good of our dear

people's souls useless and abortive. Now if these things are really true, as you as well as I know they be, then I leave your own conscience (as well as others) to judge whether such a practice as this amounts to, deserves any gentler name than thieving and robbery.

And finally as to your information about conversion, what a divine supernatural work it is, what this gracious change means, its efficient, the manner how it is wrought, the circumstances and effects or fruits of it, I would advise you to read your Reverend Fathers, Bp. Hall, Bp. Bull, Bp. Hopkins, Bp. Usher, Perkins, Pemble, and Dr. Edwards on this great subject, as also Mr. Shepherd's *Sincere Convert and Sound Believer*, Mr. Joseph Allins *Alarms to the Unconverted*, Mr. Stoddard on *Conversion* and his *Safety of Appearing in the Righteousness of Christ*, and Mr. Right on *The New Birth*, etc., with whose judgment in this important affair of conversion I fully agree, and if these sage experienced divines dont satisfy you in the matter of your own share in this mighty work of God, and lead you to see whether you are converted or not, it will be in vain for me to think of doing it; and seeing you was pleased to receive an accusation against an elder contrary to the Apostle's rule, 1 Tim. 15, 19, I hope this answer may suffice; and that you will not move me by your replies to write or say anything further of your misconduct in these affairs. And now heartily wishing that both you and I may be so directed by the God of peace and truth in the way of our duty as that our final account may be with joy and comfort, I remain,

Your cordial friend and humble servant,

Hez. Gold

Stratford
July 14, 1741.

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO HEZEKIAH GOLD. JULY 16, 1741.

July 16, 1741.

Sir: —

Though you hope I will not, I must beg leave of you to do myself and the church that justice to make some reply to yours of the 14th, for which I return you my hearty thanks, but must own I am extremely surprised you should deny what Mr. Nichols affirms, and is ready to do it under the solemnity of an oath, nor did I add a word or syllable to what I took down from his own mouth. And

this confirms me that the opposition to our church and the enmity and aversion that is industriously propagated against it entirely depends, if I may give you your own words "on tattling and falsehood." And when there have been so many falsehoods and injurious misrepresentations of me and the church scattered about among the people it is very hard and strange indeed that you should upbraid me with speaking and writing in defense of it. Tread on a worm and it will turn. No, Sir, I would not have answered my duty to God and my own conscience if I had not done it.

As to your ordinations, although I doubted of them for myself and could not have answered a good conscience if I had not received Episcopal ordination (the doing of which sometimes laid me under a necessity, when put upon it by others, of giving the reasons of my persuasion and conduct) yet I can truly say I never uncharitably censured you or any man, ministers or people, that were satisfied with them, nor did I ever endeavor to disquiet anybody in their persuasions about them, nor industriously begin discourse with them to that purpose, though I held it my duty to explain myself when assaulted, sought to, or desired, on these subjects. Much less did I ever call you usurpers, invaders and blind guides, and I challenge you to bring one of your own people that will say that I ever used those expressions or any others that savored of uncharitableness. No, Sir, you are much mistaken in me — I am not the man you imagine me to be and would have found me if you had not in such an uncharitable manner stood at a distance and rejected all neighborly and Christian intercourse and conversation with me. However, though you deny you said those hard things of me, you insist upon it they are true and go on to prove them, and appeal to my own conscience and say there are many witnesses to the truth of them. As to my own conscience if I have any knowledge of that, I assure you what you allege against me is utterly false, and as to other witnesses pray bring them as soon as you please. If I have done any thing that is wrong or dishonorable let me be convicted of it. Bring one of your own people that are now so, if you can; let them speak out plain, I will not be offended. Let them say if they can that I ever endeavored to lead them or any other into a wrong or ill opinion of you or that ever I visited any of them that were uneasy at any of your proceedings, or that I said anything of them or concerned myself with them before they came to me and desired

to be led into right understanding of our church in order to conform to it. And if anyone of what denomination soever desire my conversation and instruction it is my duty as a minister of Christianity to say and do the best I can for them; in this case *vae mihi si non evangelizavero!* And as to those that have come to me, I will appeal to them, and I beg them to speak out if ever I have said or done a dishonorable or unchristian thing — nay anything that I would not wish you to do to me in the like cases. You doubtless mean Col. Lewis and his brethren and perhaps some others when you speak of those that are covenant breakers, and of an unforgiving spirit, and though they are my disciples they are none of Christ's because they cannot bear his cross, etc. Pray, dear Sir, wherein have they acted unbecoming the character of Christians? Has not the Col. in fact proved himself to be most grievously injured? Has he not sought again and again in the spirit of meekness to have justice done him and been rejected? Have you not practically at least declared that you will not proceed by the rules of the Gospel in his case, which was all he desired? Pray, Sir, lay your hand upon your heart and say if he has been used as it becomes a Christian brother to be used. Must he be censured as not willing to bear the cross of Christ and be his disciple who is not willing and contented to be grossly injured without seeking for a redress? And is modestly and decently seeking for a lawful redress, when we are injured, taking offense at the cross of Christ? Is it a necessary part of the character of Christian disciples that they must quietly bear any injury from their Christian brothers without seeking for a remedy? And yet after all as to the temper of these gentlemen say wherein have they expressed an unforgiving spirit? This I assure you is what I have inculcated upon them and made a term of their communicating with me, that they freely forgive all the world however so great injuries they may have sustained, and I never heard of an unforgiving, a malicious, revengeful or uncharitable word or action that proceeded from them. Say, Sir, bear witness if there has and let all God's people bear witness. If they could not have right done them among you must they be censured yet further as none of Christ's disciples because they come to church? This is hard indeed. No, sure they and every man have a right to think for themselves and judge and choose for themselves. This is a right you take to yourself and nobody abridges you, and pray what right have you or any man to

abridge or censure them on that account? Did they promise to walk with you however so injuriously they were used? No, Sir, it is not they have broke covenant with you but you with them in refusing to walk with them according to the rules of the Gospel! This indeed was what they and every Christian as such has promised, but pray wherein have they broke through the rules of the Gospel in their behavior towards you? As to myself I do aver that in all cases of controversy that have happened I have conducted with all the caution and tenderness that (rating human frailty) I possibly could. Indeed if any persons have been ever so notorious sinners, we ought not, you do not, deny them the privilege of being hearers in our public worship, but I challenge you to produce one instance where I have received any to my communion that is an open notorious sinner without his testifying his repentance; and lastly as to my conversion, I must observe that you have gone quite beside the question. I desired you to give me your reasons why you judged me unconverted. Instead of this you only tell me of a number of authors you approve of on that subject. As it happens I have read and considered the sense of all the authors you mention except the last, and do agree in substance with what they teach though some of them explain some things in a manner I do not altogether like. But as to those reverend fathers of ours you mention, I like their notions of conversion entirely well, especially Bp. Bull, than whom no man hath ever taught any of the doctrines of Christianity better. And I do humbly hope through free grace I have in some good measure experienced what he teaches. But I will always remember — and I beg you to remember it (which I am sure it vastly concerns you to do after all these hard censures) what St. Paul says, I Cor. 13, Tho' I could speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not charity, I am (so far from having true conversion that I am) but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. I do most heartily join with you in your concluding prayer and remain, '

Sir,

Your most sincere friend and humble servant,

S. J.

Hezekiah Gold to Samuel Johnson. July 21, 1741.

Sir: —

I don't wonder that a man is not afraid of sinning that believes

he has power in himself to repent whenever he pleases, nor is it strange for one who dares to utter falsehoods of others to be ready at any time to confirm them with the solemnity of an oath, — especially since he adheres to a minister whom he believes has power to wash him from all sins by a full and final absolution upon his saying he is sorry for them, etc.; and as for the pleas which you make for Col. Lewis, and others that have broke away disorderly from our church, I think there's neither weight nor truth in them; nor do I believe such poor shifts will stand them nor you in any stead in the awful day of account; and as for your saying that as bad as you are yet you lie open to conviction, — for my part I find no reason to think you do, seeing you are so free and full in denying plain matters of fact; and as for your notion about charity from that 1 Cor. xiii, my opinion is that a man may abound with love to God and man, and yet bear testimony against disorderly walkers, without being in the least guilty of the want of charity towards you. What! must a man be judged uncharitable because he don't think well nor uphold the willful miscarriages and evil doings of others? This is surely a perverse interpretation of the Apostle's meaning. I don't think it worth my while to say anything further in the affair, and as you began the controversy against rule or justice, so I hope modesty will induce you to desist; and do assure you that if you see cause to make any more replies, my purpose is, without reading of them, to put them under the pot among my other thorns and there let one flame quench the matter. These, Sir, from your sincere friend and servant in all things lawful and laudable,

Hez. Gold

Stratford, July 21, 1741.

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO HEZEKIAH GOLD. AUG. 1, 1741.

August 1, 1741.

Dear Sir: —

You conclude your last with such an unmerciful resolution to commit what I write to the flames without reading it, that I was long in suspense whether to write again, but at last I concluded to venture the sacrifice of one letter more in hopes that possibly since that you may have relented from that dreadful purpose, but I do assure you according to my present views this shall be my last

unless you can be reduced to a more calm and Christian temper. However, you may assure yourself, after all, that 'tis past, which in my part has been entirely free from the least resentment. I am in the same disposition that ever I was to live if possible in a peaceable charitable and neighborly manner with you. But indeed I confess while you retain that utterly wrong notion of me and the church which you have so strangely imbibed and are so strongly possessed of, I do not at all wonder at the uncharitable and bitter spirit you express towards us. And I do assure you that as I am heartily grieved to see you so miserably deceived in your notion of the church, and in consequence thereof, so embittered against it, so it is not an itch of scribbling, much less the vanity of aiming at the last word that puts me upon writing again. No! These be far from me! But it is purely in compassion to you that I do it, and with a sincere and well-meaning aim if possible at removing your prejudices and bringing you to a juster opinion of the church and in consequence of this into a more charitable temper towards it, for though you are miserably deceived in your notion of things, I hope you are not one that will hold fast deceit and refuse to let it go, and that you will not therefore think me your enemy because I tell you the truth. What leads me to write in this manner is the first paragraph of your letter from whence it manifestly appears to be your notion of the church that we hold and teach that a man has power in himself to repent when he pleases, and that the minister has power to wash a man from all his sins, by a full and final absolution upon his only saying he is sorry for them. Now these two propositions I agree with you are most vile and pernicious doctrines, and nothing can be more fatal and mischievous to the souls of men and if the church taught or practised according to these doctrines I would abhor and fly from her as from the face of a serpent. But now, Sir, as God is true, nothing can be falser than this virulent charge. How miserably then are you deceived in entertaining this opinion of us, and how utterly injurious are you in charging us with these vile tenets. No, Sir, we hold and teach as much as you do, our utter inability to repent without the help of God's Holy Spirit, and the utter impossibility of all hopes of pardon or absolution merely for saying we are sorry, or indeed for being really so without real reformation in heart and life. Nay I am sure in one half hour's conversation with you I could convince you that as our absolution implies nothing else but a declara-

tion of God's pardon to all true penitents, so we hold no absolution in any other sense than you do yourself. Pray, Sir, where did you learn these dreadful notions of the church? Have you lived nigh twenty years so near a church and all this while understood us no better? I beg, Sir, in faithfulness to your self that you will be ashamed and even confounded that you should ever have entertained such a thought of us so utterly groundless and abusive!

As to Col. Lewis, etc., pray ought you not in charity to hope that he and I are seriously concerned to give a good account of our selves at the great tribunal as well as you? In charity, I say (which thinks no evil, but hopes all things and believes all things in favor of our neighbor), which would incline you to think they do appear so to us weighty reasons, though you in your unkind opinion think them poor shifts. However it is the greatest comfort that we have not unmerciful man to set in judgment upon us but a merciful God who sees the heart and will judge according to truth and equity. You indeed would represent as though I held it inconsistent with charity to bear testimony against the willful miscarriages of others. Now pray, Sir, once more, lay your hand on your heart and say whether you dont think you abuse me here. Did I say any thing like it? Not a syllable. No, Sir, so far from this that I allow charity does oblige us to bear testimony against willful sinners. But then I say it is uncharitable to judge people unconverted when they lead regular lives and charge them with things they never thought of and to censure them as being willful sinners without proving them to be such. This was what I begged you to do in my case, and still beg you will not uncharitably and unjustly give me the lie in what I still insist is matter of fact, but if I am guilty of such notorious crimes prove me to be so, and I do here protest and promise you that if any of your own people or your best friends will aver to me that ever I conducted otherwise than I represented or was guilty of any one of the facts you charge me with I will heartily kneel and beg your pardon.

You untruly say I began the controversy when you know you began it in your talk with Mr. Nichols. Were it not for that I should never have thought of writing a syllable. And now, Sir, give me leave in my turn to put you in mind of that dreadful tribunal you are so ready to mention and cite us to, in view of which I have done and said and written all that has passed, and consider seriously in what light your groundless notions of us and un-

charitable tempers towards us will then and there appear. However as I do still charitably hope you mean well, though through ignorance and incogitancy and the force of prejudice and passions you have so unkindly censured us, so I earnestly pray God you may find mercy with him in that day. And after all that is passed, believe me when I say I have no other than a hearty good will to you, and that upon the score of ancient friendship I have a particular kindness for every branch of your family. Accordingly I remain,

Sir, your real friend and humble servant,

S. Johnson

P. S. Since my last I have also read the other author you mentioned, Wright on the New Birth and do entirely agree with all he teaches on that subject, though in two or three small paragraphs I did not so well like his manner of explaining himself, but his doctrine is excellent and in many places as contrary to the doctrine of these new teachers so much in vogue as light and darkness.

A Letter from Samuel Johnson to Jedidiah Mills. Nov. 23, 1741.

Stratford, November 23, 1741.

Sir: —

In answer to your letter without dates which I received this day and for which I thank you, I do in the first place assure you that by the grace of God truth shall never make me angry; so far from this that however so much I am abused and misrepresented contrary to truth, I hope I shall be enabled to bear it without any unchristian resentment and be ready to forgive those that do eversomuch revile and slander me. Indeed it is impossible for me to be aware what you may get some people to say of me, but this I am sure of that you can never produce any true witnesses to attest that ever I denied the doctrine of original sin or anything that implies it. And let me tell you, Sir, a very plain truth allowed by people of both denominations, and that is that whatever the matter is, the world has not in general that opinion of your truth and sincerity as to take your word for an infallible evidence for the truth of what you report and I have no reason to think but that I shall generally be believed at least as soon as you will, so that it is not my own personal character I am at all concerned for but it is the truths and honor of God that has engaged me to write on this occasion and defend myself. However you may depend upon it that I am not ashamed, not afraid to appear face to face with you or any evidences you can produce be they who they will, and be it where and when you please. And indeed I do not think it proper that you and I should converse together any more without sufficient evidence for what passes between us, and I am very sorry there were no witnesses to our last conversation, which whatever it was, though I should not be ashamed of it, yet sure I am every one that knows what becomes human nature will readily allow that it was utterly inconsistent with the character of a gentleman, not to say a Christian, to betray private conversation and especially in such a public manner to represent it in such an odious light. But Sir, you must give me leave to insist on it that as you represent our conversation in this letter it is in several instances very untrue. And if that

conversation which you say you wrote down was no more justly and candidly represented than this it is easy to guess from what quarter it comes that there are so many and agregious untruths spread about the world concerning me and the church which I have frequently been told of. As to the account which you give of this conversation, I must observe to you in the first place, it is not true that you undertook to prove me a stranger to any experimental acquaintance with the Gospel way of salvation, as I understood you. So far from this that you denied you ever said so of me, and moreover when I told you wherein I placed true Christianity you agreed with me that the practical fruits of the spirit were the only genuine evidences of a good estate, and that a person might have all the symptoms, now so much in vogue, of terrors and joys and not be in a good estate, and that a person might be in a good estate and not have those symptoms so as to know the precise time of his conversion. Indeed you talked about Dr. Clarke, but I never undertook to justify his doctrines of original sin, which I ever allowed to be expressed too loosely and unguardedly; only I was willing to put a more favorable construction on it than you did, nor do I remember I ever advised Darby people to read his sermons in public, but I am sure I advised them not to do it and lent them another book to read that they might not read his. It is moreover very untrue that I denied that man is born into the world under guilt as related to the first Adam, understanding by guilt an obligation to suffer punishments as I then explained myself, for this I ever allowed; that every man that is born into the world is under obligation out of Christ to suffer his share of the punishment which Adam brought on himself and his posterity with him by his disobedience. But I told you if by guilt you mean blame I could not suppose any man was to blame or feel contrition in yourself for what Adam did, and asked you whether you could find yourself to blame for what Adam did above 5000 years before you was born, so as to set yourself in earnest to repent of it. This was what I told you I could not make sense of or reconcile either with the divine attributes, or the Holy Scriptures. Nor did you offer a word to justify it, and yet it is for this only that I know of that you can charge me with denying original sin, for excepting this rigid sense, as I called it, of the imputation of Adam's sin with the consequences of it, I know not of anything wherein you differed from me, but these two

points indeed I could never find taught in Scripture or to be consistent with either that or the divine attributes, *viz.*, that any man is properly to blame for Adam's sin or that God, the father of our spirits and author of our souls, which he has made, does in creating every soul of mankind derived from Adam, infuse wicked habits or perverse tendencies into it. These things I could not for the love of God give in to. And pray, Sir, is this to corrupt the pure word of God, which tells us not a syllable of any such thing? Is this to prejudice the salvation of precious souls? That you must think it necessary to represent me publicly in such an odious light as denying original sin, which rightly understood I firmly believe to be a fundamental doctrine of Christianity, when I solemnly declare that I do firmly believe not only the fact of the original rebellion and apostacy of our first parents but also together with it all the fatal effects and consequences of it in the deplorable polution, guilt and corruption of the whole human race. Now when I firmly receive and live under a deep and humbling sense of this great truth, can it be anything else but a little, narrow, mean-spirited bigotry in you to charge me with denying this doctrine, merely because I differ a little from you in explaining the modus of it? And can it be other than a most unchristian spirit of censoriousness and uncharitableness for you to censure me for no other reason than that, as having never been acquainted with a work of grace in my own soul? Pray Sir, is every notion of yours and every phrase of your metaphysical jargon in explaining (or rather darkning) this or any other doctrine of Christianity so sacred that it must immediately be death and damnation to differ an ace from you? No. Sir, whatever you have, I assure you I have not so learned Christ as thus to censure every one that differs from me, or that thus censures me for differing from them. I will rather say, Father forgive them for they know not what they do. And I desire you will please to know that I trust I have as deep and serious a concern that the pure word of God be not corrupted or the salvation of precious souls prejudiced as you have. And whatever you pretend of respect to my person I can see nothing but a spirit of venom and uncharitableness that could put you upon this open solemn work of preaching against me. However I heartily forgive you and earnestly pray God you may not be misled in either of these respects as I sadly fear you are in denying the true extent and meaning of his great and precious promises and

think I could demonstrate it would the time and paper allow. But I break off, and remain,

Sir,

Your sincere friend and humble servant

S. J.

A / LETTER / To / MR. SAMUEL BROWNE / Of / Waterbury. / In / Answer to a letter of his in Defense of Absolute Predestination. / by Rev. Samuel Johnson, D.D. / Rector of Christ Church / Stratford, Conn.

Jan. 1st. 1737/8.

Sir:—

I am very well pleased with the nervous reasoning of your modest and ingenious letter of December 28th, and wish I had leisure to return so large and particular an answer as it deserves. I will, however, offer a few short strictures upon what you therein advance in favor of the doctrine of absolute decrees from all eternity concerning the eternal condition of men after this life.

In order to which, I would first observe to you, that what prejudices me against that doctrine is, that it manifestly appears to me to be contrary to the divine attributes, to many plain texts of Holy Scripture, and to the general drift and design of the whole Word of God. It appears contrary to the nature and attributes of God in that it seems plainly inconsistent with the very notion of his being a moral governor of the world, since it necessarily implies a design in Him to lay his creatures under a necessity of being sinful and miserable to all eternity antecedent to any consideration of their demerit; and this out of a most selfish view of promoting his own glory at the expense of their eternal misery; and besides this it implies a manifest double dealing with them in declaring, and that even with an oath, his earnest desire for their happiness, while He secretly designs their infallible ruin. It also appears evidently contrary to a great many plain texts of Holy Scripture, which assure us in the clearest and strongest terms, that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. That He would have all men to be saved, and that for this end Christ tasted death for every man, and became a propitiation for the sins of the whole world and gave himself a ransom for all, nay even for those that by denying the Lord that bought them bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 Pet. 3, 9;

and 2, 1. 1 Tim. 2, 4-6; Heb. 2, 9; 1 Joh. 2, 2. etc. etc. And lastly it seems manifestly repugnant to the general drift of the whole Scriptures (which is plainly to excite our utmost activity and engage us to all holiness in heart and life), there being nothing that can so effectually tend to cut the sinews of all our endeavors to repent and obey, as even the most distant surmise that possibly all our labor may be in vain, since, for ought we know, we may be excluded from all possibility of succeeding, by an absolute and inexorable decree of reprobation.

Whereas, on the contrary, nothing can tend more effectually to put us upon the most vigorous exerting ourselves, in endeavoring to be holy as God is holy, righteous as He is righteous, and merciful as He our Heavenly Father is merciful, than those amiable apprehensions of Him which represent Him as being in and through Christ, an universal and irrespective lover of the souls that He has made and sincerely and solicitously desirous of their happiness, in proportion to their several capacities and ready for his sake without respect of persons, to send them all the aid and assistance necessary thereunto, so far as can consist with treating them as being what they are, and what He hath made them, *i. e.*, free, self-exerting and self-determining agents, and to make all the tender and merciful allowances for their frailty that can consist with the sincerity of their obedience and his righteousness and authority in the government of the world. And this I take to be the idea or conception of Him, which (agreeable to the light of nature) the Holy Scriptures universally give us concerning Him.

On which account if there be any difficulties from either reason or Scripture (as to me there appear none, but what by attentive consideration may be easily surmounted) yet, methinks, we should be strongly inclined, for God's sake, as well as our own if possible to get over them, and whatever obscure texts there are that may seem to carry a different sound with them, to interpret them (as in fact, the church of God always did in her best and purest ages) into a consistency with the divine attributes, and those many plain texts that are entirely consonant to them, and the general drift of the whole Word of God; being well assured that, whatever be the meaning of those few obscure texts, they cannot possibly mean anything contrary either to the light of nature, or any other texts of Scripture, or any thing that can tend to make us negligent or quiet in our sins, or to discourage or dishearten us in our utmost

endeavors to reform our lives and bring forth the fruits of holiness and sincere obedience.

You have mentioned but two texts to support the doctrine of absolute personal decrees relating to the eternal condition of men, and they are Rom. 9, 6 etc., and Eph. 1, 4, and what I shall say on these texts may be applied to most if not all others, that relate to this subject. And first as to Rom. 9th. In order to the solution of what difficulties may seem to arise from this text we must distinguish between talents bestowed upon men in this life, which is a state of probation, and the retributions to be awarded in the life to come, according to what use men make of them here. In the one God acts as a sovereign lord of his favors, and in the other as a righteous judge of the behavior of his creatures under them.

Both justice and goodness seem evidently to require that in giving being to a creature, it be placed in a condition that (in the whole of its circumstances and duration) is better than not to be, or that renders being desirable to it, every thing being considered. Nor can it, I think, consist with justice to put a conscious intelligent creature into a state that is, in the whole, worse than not to be at all unless it be for its own personal demerit. But all that is bestowed upon it beyond a condition that does in the whole render being desirable is matter of mere favor and grace.

Now in the distribution of talents which are favors, it will be readily allowed that God may deal as he pleases; He may bestow his favors to whom and in what measure and manner He thinks fit, and none can reasonably complain, so long as his condition is better than not to be, and it will be his own fault if he be not in some good degree happy, since he shall not be accountable for what he had not received and shall be treated only according to his own conduct and in proportion to the talents committed to his trust.

God is therefore confessedly sovereign and arbitrary in his various distributions of talents and favors to his creatures and the several conditions in which he places them, allotting to one the nature and condition of a man, to another that of an angel; to one man or number of men, one talent, *viz.*, the light of nature; to another, two talents, *viz.*, Judaism; and to another five, *viz.*, Christianity; to one man a healthy, to another a sickly constitution, to one poverty, to another riches, to one small abilities and mean advantages, to another large powers and great opportunities for learning and improvement, etc.

In these and the like distribution of his favors in this state of probation, I allow God's decrees may be absolute and personal, as well as national. But this is but a temporary and probationary state; whereas in the state of retribution after this life, the condition of men will decided for all eternity, and this not according to what they have received here, but according to what improvements they have made of what they received, as is plain from Mat. 25, and many other texts. There, therefore, an absolute decision has nothing to do; so that God's decrees and dispensations with regard to that state, can imply nothing else but his resolution to treat all men according to the use they shall have made of his several allotments to them in this world, in exact proportion to what they had received, to render the good happy and the wicked miserable in various proportions according to their several behavior.

I interpret God's hardening Pharaoh's heart not of any actual efficiency, but of God's leaving him to the hardness of his heart, in the same sense as it is said God moved David to number Israel (2 Sam. 29, 1) which in 1 Chron. 25, 1, is called Satan provoking him, which therefore can only mean God's permitting Satan to tempt him in the same sense as it is said (Gen. 39, 22), whatever was done in the prison Joseph was the doer of it, not that he actually did it but that it was done with his permission and under his eye and superintendency.

Now I cannot find by attending to the language of St. Paul or the occasion and scope of his reasoning in the Epistle to the Romans that the ninth chapter has any direct relation to the condition of men after this life, or what retribution God will make to them in proportion to their behavior here, in the use of the talents he has committed to their trust; but it is manifestly to be understood of the various distributions of his talents and favors to them during this their state of probation, in choosing or rejecting whom He pleases, with regard to the privileges of being his peculiar people, in which He is merely sovereign and arbitrary. He was so in choosing the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at first to enjoy the great talent of revealed religion and the promise of the Messiah, and in rejecting that of Ishmael and Esau from that privilege, though they were not destitute of a good degree of favor in enjoying the lesser talent of the light of nature. And so He was now in rejecting the Jews for a time and calling the Gentiles to the yet

greater and inestimable talent of the Gospel. I say of these dispensations of Providence St. Paul is to be understood, for it is manifest that those passages of Jacob and Esau and of Isaac and Ishmael are not to be understood of the persons themselves (much less of their eternal state), but of the nations to descend from them; as will appear if you look into the texts in Genesis from whence they are quoted. Thus of Jacob and Esau it was said to Rebecca, Gen. 25, 23, two nations are in thy womb, two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger. And that text, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated, quoted from Mal. 1, 2, 3, is manifestly to be understood, not of the persons but of the nations.

Where, by the way, neither is God's hatred of Esau to be understood to imply absolute hatred (for he had a good blessing) but only of a less degree of love, according to a known figure of speech in the Hebrew language, by which that is frequently spoken absolutely which is meant comparatively. In the same sense Christ says, he that hateth not father and mother, etc., cannot be my disciple (Luk. 14, 26) where surely He cannot be understood to mean absolute hatred, but only a less degree of love, and so He explains himself in another place, by saying he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, Mat. 10, 37. So that God's hating Esau only means that he loved Jacob, *i. e.*, the people of Israel more than Esau, *i. e.*, the people of Edom, and bestowed greater talents on the one than on the other.

It is therefore only with respect to the bestowment of certain special privileges and talents in this life that St. Paul is here to be understood when he says (v. 16),* it is not of him that willeth (for Abraham wished, O that Ishmael might live!) nor of him that runneth (for Esau ran to fetch the venison that he might obtain the blessing) but of God that showeth mercy; who therefore in the bestowment of favors, hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hath compassion on whom he will have compassion. For here justice hath nothing to do, so that in distributing his favors there can be no unrighteousness in Him, He may do what He will with his own. And with respect to these it may be justly said, Who are thou O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say

* Whitby.

unto Him that formed it why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor? Where, yet, it must be observed that vessels made for dishonorable, or less honorable services have yet some degree, some interest in their maker's and owner's love and favor. But all this has nothing to do with the distributions of the life to come. There justice alone takes place, which consists only in the exact proportioning of rewards and punishments to men according to their good or ill conduct in the use of the several favors and talents committed to them in this life.

But you will perhaps say, is not the example of Pharaoh to be understood with regard to the distributions of the life to come? I answer, no. For St. Paul was as well concerned to vindicate the justice of God in rejecting the Jews, as his sovereignty in freely bestowing his Gospel favors upon the Gentiles. To this purpose therefore, it is that he alleges the instance of Pharaoh, that he might justify God's dealings in rejecting the Jews, and justly hardening their hearts, *i. e.*, leaving them to the hardness of their hearts in rejecting Christ, as He had justly hardened Pharaoh's heart, *i. e.*, left him to the hardness of his heart in rejecting the force of the miracles he had wrought for his conviction; and to show that God might justly make the Jews monuments of his wrath in cutting them off from being a people for their obstinate rejecting of Christ, as He had made Pharaoh a monument of his wrath in the eyes of the world for his obstinacy in hardening his heart against all the means used for his conviction. And that expression about Pharaoh, v. 17, for this cause have I raised thee up, etc., does not mean for this cause have I given thee being; but for this cause have I made thee to stand, as the Hebrew word imparts, *i. e.*, for this cause have I supported thee, and prolonged thy life through one plague after another, that I might for thy obstinacy and perverseness make thee an illustrious example of my vengeance to all the earth. And whom He will He pardoneth, v. 18, means only whom He will, of those who deserve to be abandoned for their personal disobedience obstinacy and impenitence, he makes use of as monuments of his wrath for the terror of others, and proceeding according to his wise and righteous good pleasure in the government of the world, he does accordingly justly leave to the hardness of their hearts, as he did Pharaoh, and was now determined in like manner to leave the Jews for their obstinacy

and wickedness in rejecting and crucifying of Christ. But what has all this to do with any absolute decrees of God, and especially with regard to the personal and eternal state of men? — And thus much for the 9th of Romans.

As to your other text, Eph. 1, 4, you know the Ephesians were mostly Gentiles, though there might be some Jews among them; and the design of that expression of choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world, was probably, as Dr. Whitby supposes, to obviate a notion that had obtained among the Jews, which we find in their writers, as though God had chosen them only, in the Messiah that was to come, and that before the foundation of the world, which they conceited was made for their sakes; whereas the Apostle in allusion to this way of speaking would have them know that they ought not to arrogate the notion of any such privilege to themselves alone, but that God had chosen or designed the Gentiles as well as them to have the benefit of the Messiah and that before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy or sanctified to God in Him to lead holy and virtuous lives here, and so be happy forever hereafter.

And accordingly it may be truly said of all that are called to the knowledge of Jesus Christ that they are chosen in Christ, as being at least externally members of his body, the church, to have the great talent of the Gospel committed to them, and that for this end, that by the dispensation of the Gospel they might learn to be holy in all manner of conversation, and be thereby partakers of the benefits of that adoption they were predestinated unto. For all that are baptised are, as to their external standing, in the family or household of God, and so are the reputed children of God having a conditional title to the eternal inheritance; and are really such, and will finally be treated as such, by being put into the actual possession of that heavenly inheritance provided for them, if they yield a truly filial obedience to God their heavenly father, conformable to his holy Gospel, and persevere faithful to their high and holy calling to the end of their days. Now I cannot see that this text need or can reasonably be supposed (consistent with other texts) to imply any such absolute and personal decree concerning the eternal condition of men as you plead for. So far from this that it is only the condition of future happiness that is here spoken of.

Indeed the word chosen, when set in contradistinction to those

that are called, as in that text, Mat. 20, 16, many are called but few are chosen, signifies those that are approved good men, who comply with the call of the Gospel: so that the sense of those words is, that though many are called to the knowledge of the Gospel, as they had been (according to the forementioned sense of the word) chosen and appointed to enjoy that inestimable talent, yet of these there are comparatively but few that do in heart and life conform themselves to the Gospel and thereby become such as God approves of and delights in; and the rest are called reprobate or disapproved of God, as being rejected for their disobedience. So that, neither can this text be reasonably supposed to imply any absolute decree concerning the eternal fate of men.

Upon the whole it seems to me that the right way of forming a just notion of God's decrees is to judge of them by the facts as they really are before our eyes. No man is, in fact, laid under a necessity of being sinful and miserable; therefore God never decreed absolutely that he should be so; and God has, in fact, assured us that none shall be miserable at last but for their own fault. It must therefore have been His decree that those that are miserable at last shall be so only for their own inexcusable wickedness. There are in fact, a great variety of privileges and talents actually bestowed on mankind; therefore God, as the sovereign lord of his favors decreed there should be such a variety. And he has in fact declared that good men who make a good use of them will be happy, and the slothful, the wicked, and impenitent will be miserable, according to the sentence which He will pass upon them as the righteous judge of their conduct and behavior. And therefore He decreed that this should be the result of things, *viz.*, that the righteous should be happy and the wicked miserable. This is all the notion I can have of the decrees of God. And as God has thus plainly discovered his decrees to be such as the facts in conjunction with revealed religion declare them to be, so I conceive that his great end in giving being to his creatures, and in all his various dispensations towards them, must have been, not any advantage to Himself, but that they might be happy in proportion to their several talents and improvements, in consequence of their cheerful submission to his sovereign allotments and sincere obedience to his holy and righteous laws; only with this reserve, that in case of their final obstinacy and disobedience they should be miserable in

proportion to the several degrees of their wickedness, for the terror of others, and to support the honor of his laws and authority in the government of the world.

But I begin to exceed the bounds of a letter, and must here break off, though much more needs to be said upon so copious and important a subject, which I must leave to be further discussed in conversation, if what I have written be not satisfactory. In the meantime assure yourself that I shall be glad to be any ways useful to you; and I pray God lead you and me to the knowledge of the truth here and in the practice of holiness to everlasting happiness hereafter! And remain,

Dear Sir,

Your real friend,
and humble servant,
Samuel Johnson

Part IV

LETTERS CONCERNING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

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A / LETTER / From / ARISTOCLES / To / AUTHADES, / Concerning the / SOVEREIGNTY / And the / PROMISES OF GOD. / As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts, saith the Lord. Isai. 55. 9. / O House of Israel, are not my ways equal? — Are not your ways unequal? — For I have no pleasure in him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye. Ezek. 18. 29, 32. / —— *Magna est veritas et praevalebit.* —— / BOSTON: / Printed and sold by T. Fleet, at the Heart and Crown in Cornhill, 1745.

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What prevailed on me to consent to the publishing of the following letter, was a sincere and firm persuasion, that it is really the cause of God and his Christ that I here plead, and that the eternal interest of the souls of men is very nearly concerned in it. For it is manifest to me, that some notions have of late been propagated and inculcated in this country, that are equally destructive to the right belief both of God and the Gospel. I have indeed that charity for those that have done it, that I do not believe they are at all sensible of these fatal consequences of what they teach, tho' I very much wonder they are not aware of them.

I am not insensible that the odious name of Arminianism will be the cry against these papers, from those little minds that are affected with sounds more than sense, and that are engaged at any rate to support a party, without seriously and impartially attending to the truth and right of the case. But I do hereby declare, that I abhor all such party name and distinctions, and that I will call no man master upon earth, for one is my Master in Heaven. The only question worth attending to, is, not what Calvin, of what Arminius taught, but what Christ and his apostles taught, for he alone was the author and finisher of our faith. And (all metaphysics and words without any meaning, being set aside, which have nothing to do with the present subject) I humbly submit it to every one's candor and unbiassed consideration, whether what follows

be not truly the doctrine of Christ: the substance of which may be briefly expressed in the following manner, and in the very language of the Holy Ghost, *viz.*,

"That God really means as he says, when he says and swears by himself, that he hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth: that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and be saved: and that he hath given his Son a ransom for all, who accordingly hath tasted death for every man, and was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world: so that whosoever will may now come and take of the Waters of Life freely and because of our inability to help our selves, God hath by his blessed Son, assured us that he will, for his sake, give his Holy Spirit to every one that seriously asks him, and earnestly strives to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, in whom he works by his blessed Spirit both to will and to do. And that he will through his free grace in Jesus Christ, most assuredly pardon every true penitent, accept of every sincere believer, and eternally reward all those that in the way of well doing, or in a steadfast course of sincere and universal obedience to the Gospel, are faithful unto the death." This is the true doctrine of Jesus Christ; and this is all that I was concerned to defend in the following letter.

A Letter, Etc.

Aristocles to Authades

Sir,

Upon a more mature consideration of what you, not long since, suggested to me concerning the divine sovereignty, together with what you added upon that occasion, relating to the promises of the Gospel, I beg leave to write a few lines to you upon this subject; nothing captious or disputatious, I assure you, but with that serious, calm and impartial state of mind that becomes a Christian, who is above all things desirous to know the truth, in order that he may be governed by it in the pursuit of everlasting happiness.

You may remember, it was your chief inquiry, as a test of my being a true Christian, can you in sincerity subscribe to the truth of our doctrine? By which you meant the doctrine of the divine sovereignty, as you had explained it: *i. e.*, if I understood you right, as implying God's eternal, arbitrary and absolute determination of the everlasting fate of his creatures, from his own mere motion,

and without any consideration of their good or ill behavior. To which, I must still answer: no, good Sir, by no means! For the sake of the love of God I cannot! The love of Christ itself constraineth me that I cannot! For it manifestly appears to me infinitely impossible to be true, as being utterly contrary to the divine attributes; contrary to many plain texts of Holy Scripture, and contrary to the general drift and design of the whole word of God.

It is contrary to the nature and attributes of God, because it appears plainly inconsistent with the very notion of his being a moral governor of the world: for it represents Him as laying his creatures under a necessity of being what they are, whether good or bad, and so leaves no room for either virtue or vice, praise or blame, reward or punishment, properly speaking. Nay, it implies a formed design of laying by far the greatest number of his creatures, under a necessity of being eternally miserable, antecedent to any consideration of their demerit. And this, as it is explained by some, from a most selfish view of promoting his own glory, at the expense of their endless and unavoidable misery; and in effect, of necessitating their being sinful that they might be miserable; for he that wills the end, must will the means; and this implies the most shocking reflections imaginable on the wisdom, holiness, justice and goodness of God, all at once; and no less severe reflections upon his truth; for it imports a manifest double dealing with them; a secret will inconsistent with what he has clearly revealed; since he has declared, and that with an oath, that he earnestly desires their happiness, when at the same time he secretly designs their inevitable ruin.

This doctrine also appears to be evidently contrary to a great many plain texts of Holy Scripture, which assure us in the clearest and strongest terms, that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. That He would have all men to be saved, and that for this end he sent his Son into the world, who tasted death for every man, and became a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and gave himself a ransom for all; nay, even for those that by denying the Lord that bought them, bring upon themselves swift destruction. Ezek. 18. 29, 32. 2 Pet. 3. 9. and 2. 1. 1 Tim. 2. 4, 6. Heb. 2. 9. Job 2. 2. Etc. Etc.

And lastly, it seems manifestly repugnant to the general drift of the whole word of God (which is plainly to excite our utmost activ-

ity in the pursuit of all holiness in heart and life), there being nothing that can so effectually tend not only to tempt us to entertain hard and unworthy thoughts of God, but also to cut the sinews of all our endeavors to repent and return to Him and our duty, as even the most distant surmize, that possibly all our labor may be in vain; since, for ought we know, we may be absolutely excluded from all possibility of succeeding by a sovereign and inexorable decree of reprobation.

Whereas on the contrary, nothing can so effectualy tend to put us upon the most vigorous exertion of ourselves in endeavoring to be holy as God is holy, righteous as He is righteous, and merciful as He our Heavenly Father is merciful, as those most amiable apprehensions of him, which represent him as being, in and through his blessed Son Jesus Christ, an universal and irrespective lover of the souls which he hath made, and sincerely and solicitously desirous of their happiness, in proportion to their several capacities, for Christ's sake, without respect of persons, to grant them all the aid and assistance necessary thereunto, so far as can consist with his treating them as being what they are, and what he himself hath made them, *i. e.*, tho' frail, yet free, self-exerting and self-determining agents; and to make all the tender and merciful allowances for their frailty that can consist with the sincerity of their obedience, and his righteousness and authority in the government of the world. And this, I think, is manifestly the idea or conception of God, which (agreeably to the light of nature) the Holy Scriptures universally give us concerning Him.

On which account if there be any difficulties from either reason or Scripture (as to me there appear none, but what by attentive consideration may be easily surmounted) yet methinks we should be strongly inclined, for God's sake as well as our own, to get over them; and whatever obscure texts there may be that may seem to carry a different sound, to interpret them (as in fact the Church of God always did in the first and purest ages,* and as we do now) in a manner consistent with the divine attributes, and those many plain texts that are entirely consonant to them, and the general drift of the whole word of God; being well assured that whatever be the meaning of those few obscure texts, they cannot possibly mean any thing contrary either to the light of nature, or any other

* See Dr. Whitby's discourse on these subjects, *passim*.

texts of Scripture, or that can tend to discourage or dishearten our utmost endeavors to seek and pursue the everlasting happiness of our souls.

In this manner I am obliged to think upon this great and important subject. But you told me if I could not think with you about the divine sovereignty, "I need go no further in my inquiry, there already appears upon me a black mark, and my spot is not the spot of God's children." Nay, you did, in effect, tell me, it is impossible for me under this mistake, "to be a subject of God's special grace here, or glory hereafter." * Now this is indeed dreadful! and it may be justly said, this is a hard saying, who can receive it? I beseech you, Sir, can this be right to pass such bitter censures upon every one that cannot think precisely with you in some speculative points, tho' they agree with you both in heart and life, in the great practical matters wherein the life of religion consists? Is this, can this be consistent with the spirit of the Gospel thus to judge one another, and to propagate a spirit of judging at such a prodigious rate? Can any thing be more contrary to Christ's rule, Mat. 7, 1, Judge not that ye be not judged, and to St. Paul's whole 14th to the Romans, particularly v. 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. And what can this be less than a direct invasion of his province, who claims to himself alone the prerogative of knowing and searching the hearts and trying the reins of the children of men? I do sincerely profess, that after the utmost intenseness of thought and the most solicitous care not to be misled in my apprehensions, I am still under the same necessity of thinking as I do upon these points, as I am in being persuaded that I see the sun when I look full upon it on the meridian in a clear day. And that I can no more yield my assent to some points of your doctrine than to this proposition, that 2 and 2 are equal to 5. And yet I would by no means censure you as you censure me; I will not suffer myself to imagine but that your mistakes (great as I apprehend them) may consist with your being a serious Christian.

You ask me whether I have a clear sense of the divine sovereignty in the business of our spiritual and eternal salvation? To which I answer, I trust I have. But then I must confess my notion is widely different from yours. And in order to think clearly on this subject,

* See a late Sermon on Exod. 33, 19, p. 33, 19.

and to give a just solution to what difficulties may seem to arise from the text you mentioned, or any other texts relating to this matter, it seems to me very necessary to distinguish between the consideration of God as a benefactor and as a judge; and between the bestowment of various talents and favors upon men in this life, which is a state of probation, and the retributions to be awarded in the life to come, according to what use they shall have made of them here. In the one God acts as a sovereign lord of his favors, and in the other as a righteous judge of the behavior of his creatures under them.

I agree, then, that God is entirely sovereign and arbitrary as a benefactor in the distribution of his talents and favors, both spiritual and temporal, as proper means of trial and probation in this world: *i. e.*, the various abilities, capacities, privileges and advantages He bestoweth upon mankind. And he is entirely at liberty to do what he will with his own; and consequently to bestow, not only the good things of this life, but eternal life and salvation upon his creatures in what manner and measure, and upon what terms he thinks fit; nor is he obliged to give any account to any one of his proceedings. But we may always and in all cases rest assured of this, that the judge of all the earth will do nothing but what is right; and that tho' clouds and darkness are round about him, with regard to many of his dispensations here, yet justice and judgment are always the habitation of his throne. Ps. 97, 2. Not that things are therefore right merely because he does them, but he therefore does them because they are right.

Indeed I cannot think it consistent with the divine attributes, God's wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, etc., to give being to any of his intelligent creatures, without putting them into a condition, that (every thing being considered in the whole of their nature and duration) would render being desirable to them;* nor to put them eternally into a condition that is worse than not to be, but for their own personal fault or voluntary misconduct in opposition to his will. And if you will weigh things exactly, I believe you will find your self obliged to think with me in this matter; unless you will go into those two monstrously absurd conclusions to which Dr. Twisse is reduced, and which he is obliged to maintain as being the foundations of the whole absolute system, *viz.*, that it is better to be

* See Wollaston's *Religion of Nature*, p. 200.

eternally miserable, than not to be; and consequently, that it may consist with the justice and goodness of God, to inflict exquisite and eternal misery upon innocent creatures: *i. e.* upon such as were never capable of formal or actual sin. See his *Vindiciae Gratiae, Lib.* 2, p. 16. *De Amis. Grat. Digr.* 1. Such are the hopeful principles on which that fatal doctrine is founded! But in truth, methinks I would wish any cause more effectually baffled, than to see it reduced to such prodigious absurdities as these are.

For tho' God is not accountable to his creatures for any of his proceedings, yet we must conceive, that his own infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness must be a law to him from which he cannot vary. And as I cannot think it consistent with either of them to lay any of his creatures (antecedent to any consideration of their behavior) under an absolute necessity of being eventually and irretrievably miserable; so I must do him that honor as to think, they do oblige him, in giving them being, to put them into a condition that is in the whole better than not to be, and by no means to put them into a condition that is worse than not to be, but in case of their own willful disobedience and final impenitency. For if you think otherwise, you must, in effect, suppose him to will misery merely for misery's sake! A thought so shocking and horrid that it must be forever removed at an infinite distance from that greatest and best of beings! But every thing beyond what is just sufficient to render being desirable, even to a perfect creature, however so obedient, I take to be matter of mere sovereign goodness, in which God may go into what variety He pleases: much more must the whole system of the Gospel to fallen man be matter of mere sovereign free grace; and consequently, in this dispensation of his free grace in Christ to mankind, he hath mercy and compassion on whom, in what manner and measure, and upon what terms he sees fit. And none can reasonably complain, so long as his condition is better than not to be, and it will be entirely his own fault if he be not in some degree happy; and since he shall not be accountable for what he never received, and shall be treated according to his conduct in the use of the talent that was committed to his trust.

God is therefore confessedly sovereign and arbitrary in the various distributions of his talents and favors to his creatures, and the several conditions in which he places them, as proper means and occasions of probation. It is from his mere sovereign good pleasure

that he allots to one creature the nature and condition of a man, to another that of an angel; to one man a healthy, to another a sickly constitution; to one poverty, to another riches; to one small abilities and mean advantages, to another large powers and great opportunities for learning and improvement; to one man or number of men, one talent, *viz.*, the light of nature; to another two talents, *viz.*, Judaism; to another five, *viz.*, Christianity. In these and the like distributions of favors, talents and circumstances in this state of probation, I grant God's decrees and allotments are absolute and personal as well as national. But this is but a temporary and probationary state; whereas in the state of retribution after this life, the condition of men will be decided for all eternity, and this, not according to any absolute disposition he has already made, not according to what they have received here, but according to what use and improvement they shall have made of what they had received; as is plain from many of our Savior's parables and discourses, and particularly those of the 25th of St. Matthew, as well as many other texts, and indeed from the whole Bible. It is therefore manifest, that with regard to the future state of our being, a sovereign and absolute decision cannot be supposed to take place; and that God's decrees with regard to that state can imply nothing else but his resolution to treat all men according to the use they shall have made of his several allotments to them in this world: *i. e.*, to render the good happy and the wicked miserable; in various proportions, according to their behavior.

Upon the whole, it seems to me, that the right way of forming a just notion of God's decrees, is to judge of them by the facts as they really are before our eyes. No man is in fact laid under an absolute necessity of being sinful and miserable in the whole and result of things; therefore He never decreed absolutely that he should be so. And God has in fact, assured us, that none shall be miserable at last but for their own fault; it must therefore be his decree, that those that are miserable at last shall be so only for their own inexcusable wickedness. As the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, so the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Ezek. 18, 20. There are in fact a great variety of talents and privileges bestowed on mankind; therefore God, as the sovereign lord of his favors, decreed there should be such a variety; and he has in fact declared that good men, *i. e.*, those that make a good use of them

will be happy, and the slothful, the wicked and impenitent will be miserable according to the sentence which he will pass upon them as the righteous judge of their conduct and behavior. He therefore decreed that this should be the result of things, *viz.*, that the righteous should be happy and the wicked miserable. This is all the notion that I can have of the decrees of God; and as I am persuaded this is the true sense of the Holy Scriptures taken in the whole, and critically read and considered, and with which every particular text that may seem to sound otherwise, may easily be reconciled; so I can't but think that whatever objections may seem to lie against it from the fore-knowledge of God, will be found to arise only from the narrowness of our own way of conceiving things, and to consist merely in darkening counsel by words without knowledge.

For strictly and philosophically speaking, there can be no more propriety in attributing prescience or fore-knowledge to God, than in attributing repentance to him; because there is neither past nor to come, neither fore nor after, in him; for these expressions imply succession which implies limitation, which cannot be in an infinitely perfect and immutable being. So that according to philosophic verity, they cannot any otherwise be ascribed to God than repenting, grieving, eyes, ears, hands and other bodily parts and passions. We use these and the like expressions which are used in the Holy Scriptures, as being (what they are commonly called) God's speaking of himself after the manner of men; and consequently that God's foreknowing and predestinating are terms that are used (like his repenting) merely figuratively and by way of accommodation to our weak capacities and low way of apprehending and conceiving divine things; and are to be explained after the same manner, *viz.*, that as God's repenting (Gen. 6, 6, etc.) means not any change in him, but only that the face of his conduct towards the old world was, in the event, as if he had repented he had made it, or as being fitly resembled, by a man's repenting of his having made a thing, when he sees it needful to destroy it: so God's foreknowing and predestinating (Rom. 8, 29, etc.) implies not any thing fore or after, preceding or succeeding in him, but only that the event in his conduct in this or the other instance, is as if he had foreseen or fore-determined this or the other event, or that his infinite knowledge and unerring purpose, as they appear in the facts, may be fitly resembled by the fore-sight of a wise man who shrewdly con-

jectures beforehand what will happen in such and such cases, and before determines and provides accordingly.

If therefore we should speak with strict propriety concerning God in reference to this matter, we must not say that he fore-knows or fore-ordains, but that he knows and ordains, or appoints; *i. e.*, that by one single act, one infinite all-comprehending view (to which all things that, with respect to our narrow limited minds, are past, present or to come, are equally and at once present) he sees and knows, approves or disapproves his creatures as being what they really are and appoints, orders and conducts towards them accordingly. For, as it cannot be but that God's knowledge must be absolutely perfect, he must therefore fore-see, or rather see every thing certainly as being what it is; necessary events as being necessary, and contingent as being such, and the actions of such as he made free agents as being free; but the certainty, before it is, that any thing will be, does no more infer the necessity of it, than the certainty of it when it is, implies its being a necessary event. For if so every thing would be equally necessary, and nothing could possibly have been otherwise than as it is: but to say this is absurd; because we are intuitively certain that we have (and therefore God has given us) self-exerting, and self-determining powers, and consequently that our actions, and the events of them do immediately depend on our own wills, which is the reason why we blame our selves when we do amiss, as knowing we might have done otherwise. Whereas if we suppose our actions immediately depending on the will of God, we must suppose them necessary as to us, and consequently that we are not to blame for them, being not properly agents but acted and necessitated in what we do; which is absurd, as it makes God the author of our sins, and is inconsistent with the very being of virtue or vice, of praise or blame, and of moral agency or moral government. Since therefore we know that these things are not, and cannot be so in themselves, we are sure they cannot be known or willed to be such by Almighty God.

As therefore God has thus plainly discovered his decrees to be such as the facts in conjunction with his attributes and revealed religion declare them to be, and he can have no secret reserves inconsistent with them, so I conceive that his great end in giving being to his creatures, and in all his various dispensations towards them must have been (not any self-views; not to serve himself of

them, or to add any thing to his own happiness, for he is infinitely self-sufficient for that, independent on any of his creatures, but) that they might be happy in proportion to their several capacities, talents and improvements, in consequence of their cheerful submission to his sovereign allotments, and sincere and faithful obedience to all his holy and righteous laws; only with this reserve, that in case of their final obstinacy and disobedience, they should be miserable in proportion to the several degrees of their wickedness, for the terror of others, and to support the honor of his laws and authority in the government of the world. This, I say, is the only way of thinking I can find any reason for on this subject.

Now against all this, you only desired me to read the 9th of Romans seriously and prayerfully. To which I answer, I have very often read that chapter seriously and prayerfully, and I will add, carefully too; for we must not expect our prayers to be heard, unless we use great care, diligence and exactness, as well as seriousness in the search of truth. And after all, I cannot find one syllable in it relating to the future, eternal condition of particular persons, it being only a vindication of God's sovereignty in dealing with whole nations of men, and particularly in electing the Jews at first, and rejecting them now, and calling the Gentiles to be his peculiar people, to enjoy peculiar talents and favors in this world. And I can't but think a little attention without prejudice in favor of preconceived human schemes, must satisfy any considerate person that this is really the case. Pray read and consider carefully what Dr. Whitby on the *Five Points*, and in his *Annotations*, and Dr. Clarke in the 15th of his 18 sermons, published in his life time, have written upon this chapter, and what he says upon all other texts relating to this subject in his posthumous sermons.*

The Jews conceited that they alone were, and were forever to continue the peculiar people of God, and that they alone were to enjoy the benefits of the Messiah's Kingdom. They could not therefore brook it to think that their nation must now be rejected and the Gentiles called; this was a great stumbling-block to them. Now this is the difficulty that St. Paul is here about to obviate; which he does by showing, 1st. that God is merely sovereign and arbitrary in the various distributions of his favors, and in choosing and rejecting whom he pleases with regard to the privileges of

* See also a late *Essay for a New Translation of the Bible.*

being his peculiar people; and 2dly that, however, he was now very just in rejecting them, and leaving them to the hardness of their hearts, as he did Pharaoh.

He argues in the first place, that they could not reasonably complain, because God is sovereign and arbitrary in choosing whom he will to be his peculiar people. He was so at first in choosing the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to enjoy the great talent of revealed religion, and the promise of the Messiah, and in rejecting that of Ishmael and Esau from the privilege, tho' they were not destitute of a good talent in enjoying the lesser advantage of the light of nature; and so he was now in rejecting the Jews for a time, and calling the Gentiles to the yet greater and inestimable talent of the Gospel. I say of these dispensations of Providence St. Paul is manifestly to be understood. For it is evident that those instances he alleges of Jacob and Esau, and of Isaac and Ishmael, cannot be understood of the persons themselves (much less of their eternal state) but of the nations to descend from them, as will plainly appear if you look into the texts in Genesis from whence they are quoted. Thus, as it was said of Ishmael, Gen. 17. 20, "twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation"; so of Jacob and Esau, it was said to Rebecca, Gen. 25. 23, "two nations are in thy womb, two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger"; which says the Apostle, was said that the purpose of God according to election might stand. v. 11, 12. So that this must be an election of people and not of particular persons, for it never was fact in the persons themselves.

And the next words, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated, quoted from Mal. 1. 2, 3, are manifestly to be understood, not of the persons, but of the nations; for the words are, I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and heritage waste for the dragon of the wilderness; whereas Edom saith, we are impoverished, etc., all which is evidently spoken of the people, and with regard to their condition in this world. Where, by the way, neither is God's hatred of Esau to be understood to imply absolute hatred (for he had a good blessing) but only a less degree of love; according to a known figure of speech in the Hebrew language, whereby that is frequently spoken absolutely which is meant comparatively. In the same sense, Christ says, Luk. 14. 26, he that hateth not

father and mother, etc., cannot be my disciple, where surely he cannot be understood to mean absolute hatred, but only a less degree of love; and so he explains himself, Mat. 10. 37, by saying he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. So that God's hating Esau only means that he loved him, *i. e.*, the people descending from him, less than Jacob, *i. e.*, the people descending from him, and bestowed less talents and privileges on the one than on the other.

It is therefore, only with respect to the bestowment of certain special privileges and talents in this life, that St. Paul is to be understood when he says, v. 16,* it is not of him that willeth (for Abraham wished, O that Ishmael might live) nor of him that runneth (for Esau ran to fetch the venison that he might obtain the blessing) but of God that showeth mercy, who therefore in the sovereign bestowment of his peculiar favors, hath mercy on whom he will have mercy and hath compassion on whom he will have compassion; for here justice hath nothing to do, and there can be no unrighteousness in him. And with respect to these various arbitrary distributions and allotments, it may justly be answered to any one that is tempted to find fault, as the Jews did, who are thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formeth it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor? Where yet it must be observed that vessels made to dishonorable, *i. e.*, to less honorable services, have, however, some degree, some interest in their maker's and owner's love and favor. But all this has nothing to do with the distributions of the life to come; there justice alone takes place, which consists in the exact and equitable rewards and punishments to men according to their good or ill conduct in the use of the several talents arbitrarily committed to them in this life.

But you will perhaps say, is not the example of Pharaoh to be understood of the distributions of the life to come? I answer, No. For St. Paul was as well concerned, as I said, in the second place, to vindicate the justice of God in rejecting the Jews, as his sovereignty in freely bestowing his Gospel favors upon the Gentiles. To this purpose, therefore, it is, that he alleges the example of Pharaoh, that he might justify God's dealings in rejecting the Jews, and

* See Dr. Whitby *in loc.*

justly hardening their hearts, *i. e.*, leaving them to the hardness of their hearts in rejecting Christ, as he had justly hardened Pharoah's heart, *i. e.*, left him to the hardness of his heart, in resisting the force of the miracles he had wrought for his conviction, and to show that God might justly make the Jews monuments of his wrath in cutting them off from being a people, for their obstinate rejecting of Christ, as he had made Pharaoh a monument of his wrath in the eyes of the world, for his obstinacy in hardening his heart against the means used for his conviction.

I interpret God's hardening Pharaoh's heart, not of any actual efficiency of his (for this seems needless in itself, as well as inconsistent with his attributes) but, either of God's doing that, *e. g.*, his removing the plagues, from whence he took occasion to harden his heart; or his leaving him to the hardness of his heart. In this sense it is said in 2 Sam. 24. 1, God moved David to number Israel, which, in I Chron. 21. 1, is called Satan's provoking him to number them. That expression therefore can only mean God's leaving or permitting Satan to tempt him and this is in the same sense as it is said of Joseph in prison, Gen. 39. 22, that whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. Not that he actually did it; but that it was done with his permission, and under his eye and superintendency.

And that expression, v. 17, for this cause have I raised thee up, etc., does not mean, for this cause have I given thee being; but, for this cause have I made thee to stand, as the Hebrew word imports, *i. e.*, for this cause have I supported or subsisted thee, and prolonged thy life through one plague after another, that I might, for thy obstinacy and perverseness, make thee an illustrious example of my vengeance to all the earth.

And lastly, whom he will he hardeneth, v. 18, does not mean of all that he hath given being to, whom he will he hardens in their sins, that he may render them eternally miserable; but, of those who for their personal disobedience, obstinacy and impenitency, deserve to be finally abandoned, whom he will he leaves to the hardness of their hearts, and makes use of them as monuments of his wrath for the terror of others as he did Pharaoh, and was now determined to leave the Jews for their obstinacy and wickedness, in rejecting and crucifying Christ. Thus I am obliged to interpret the 9th of Romans; and that this is the only right interpretation,

is further evident from the texts in Hosea and Isaiah, which the Apostle quotes in confirmation of the argument, v. 25, 27, 29, and from the conclusion of the whole, v. 30. and 31. From whence it is manifest, that the question is wholly between the Jews and Gentiles as a people in this present state, and consequently, that his whole discourse has nothing to do with any absolute decrees of God, with regard to the personal and eternal condition of men.

What I have said upon this text may be applied to the solution of whatever difficulties may seem to arise from other texts; such as that expression, Eph. 1. 4, of God's choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world, the meaning of which must be this: that whereas the Jews had been wont to conceit themselves the only peculiar people to enjoy the benefit of the Messiah, he would have them to know that they might not arrogate that privilege to themselves alone, but that God had chosen or designed the Gentiles as well as them to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom; and that even before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy or sanctified to God in him, to lead holy and virtuous lives here, and so be happy forever hereafter. For it may be truly said of all baptized Christians (being by that ordinance taken out of the first Adam and grafted into the Body of Christ, the second Adam, and so taken into the family and household of God) that they are predestinated to the adoption of children, v. 5. and that they are chosen in Christ, to enjoy the inestimable talent of the Gospel, that by that heavenly dispensation they might learn to be holy in all manner of conversation. And accordingly all that are baptized, and so born of water and the Spirit, being saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Joh. 3. 5. Tit. 3. 5.) are to be considered as belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven, tho' they are at present in a state of probation. But their final and everlasting possession of the heavenly inheritance provided for them, depends upon their final perseverance in obedience, for if, after all, they draw back, God's soul shall have no pleasure in them. Heb. 10. 38.

It may be added here, that the word chosen, when set in contradistinction to those that are called (as in Mat. 20. 16, "many are called, but few are chosen") signifies those that are approved good men, who comply with the call of the Gospel. So that the sense of those words, is, that, tho' there were many that, at that time, were called to the knowledge of the Gospel, yet there were comparatively

but few that did comply with the call, so as in heart and life to conform to it, and thereby become such as God approves of and delights in. And the obstinately unbelieving and disobedient are called reprobate, as being disapproved and rejected of God, for their disobedience and obstinate persisting in their rebellion and impenitency. For other texts see Whitby, Clarke and Clagget, and the Essay above-mentioned.

Thus I have given you a short sketch of my manner of thinking upon this subject, whereof this is the sum, *viz.*, that in the distribution of talents and favors in this state of probation, the sovereignty of God as a benefactor does truly take place; but in the future distributions of rewards and punishments, absolute sovereignty is entirely out of the question. As a judge deciding the eternal condition of men, God never once represents himself as arbitrary, but every where, as proceeding according to equity, without respect of persons; not treating men according to any absolute disposition he hath already made, but in exact proportion to their own conduct in the use of the talents committed to their trust.

And I would wish it to be seriously considered, that it was the wicked servant (Mat. 25. 23, compared with Luk. 19. 22.) who represented his lord (as many have lately done among us in these times) as reaping where he never sowed, and gathering where he had not strowed, *i. e.*, like Pharaoh, requiring brick without straw, requiring of his creatures things as impossible for them to do, as it is to create a world, and damning them to all eternity for not performing them. Let it also be remembered, that in the parable of the laborers, Mat. 20. 15, where God is represented as making that answer, is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? which you built so much upon, he does not mean to vindicate his conduct as a judge, as tho' in that capacity he might arbitrarily reward or not reward as he pleased (for he did exactly reward according to stipulation) but as a benefactor at first, in granting the favor and making the stipulation upon what terms he thought fit, in which he is confessedly arbitrary.

In short, the 25th of St. Matthew, and all such texts of Scripture as represent God as a judge rewarding and punishing, have not, as far as I can see, any place at all in your system of divinity. But in truth, I cannot think of a greater dishonor that can be done to Almighty God, than to represent him as arbitrary, considered as

a governor and a judge, when he has taken abundant care throughout the whole Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, to represent himself, not as an arbitrary, but as a moral governor of the world; proceeding upon stipulations with his reasonable creatures; treating them, not as machines or stocks and stones, but as rational and moral agents, such as he hath made them; bestowing means and assistances, and using arguments, motives and persuasions with them, such as promises, threatenings, examples, and the like; and rewarding or punishing them according as they shall be found to have conducted themselves. Such is the notion or conception that I am obliged to entertain of Almighty God, and with which everything in the Scriptures, I think, is clearly consistent.

But now in consequence of that strange, unnatural and unscriptural notion of the Almighty, which your doctrine seems to imply, you appear to me, in effect, to fly in the face of the whole Scriptures, by denying the being of any promises at all, as being inconsistent with the divine sovereignty. I confess, you, and those on your side, are herein consistent enough with your selves; for supposing a mere sovereign, absolute and arbitrary decision of the eternal fate of mankind, antecedent to, or without any consideration of, their personal behavior, it is plain that all stipulations, promises, threatenings, etc., are but a mere farce, and can have no serious meaning in them. But then do but consider what you are doing; for if you deny the being of any promises consistent with the sovereignty of God, you do in effect, destroy the very being of the New Covenant, and by consequence, the whole design and purport of all revealed religion; which is likewise the sad havoc that Mr. Whitefield has made of Christianity, in his piece against the *Whole Duty of Man.*

This, Sir, I confess, is a heavy charge, and nothing grieves me more than that a gentleman of your character and station has given the occasion. Indeed you was then only undertaking to prove that there are no promises in Scripture to the unregenerate, meaning by the unregenerate, those (whether baptized or not) who are under the dominion and guilt of sin. But pray how did you prove it? Why, by this argument (they were your own words) that if God had bound himself by his promise to any of his creatures, *i. e.*, good or bad, he is no more at perfect liberty either to grant or

withhold the promised blessing as may please him. Now surely if this argument proves any thing, it proves that no promise at all, to good or bad, is consistent with the divine sovereignty; and then where is there any place for any New Covenant, or indeed old either? And if the case be so, away with the Bible sure enough! It is indeed a sealed book, a dead letter, and an old almanac, as some people have of late presumed to call it. In short, if the case be thus, it can be nothing better than a mere imposture, and must be utterly a senseless and unmeaning thing. Which, by the way, is agreeable enough to Mr. Whitefield's doctrine, that no words (and consequently, not the Scriptures) can teach what it is to be a true Christian, any more than what it is to see, or what light and colors are to a man born blind. See *London Magazine* for 1739.

But I will appeal to any man of common sense, that reads the Bible carefully, whether it be not full of many exceeding great and precious promises, as St. Peter calls them, 2, 1, 4. And whether it be not manifestly the design and tendency of the whole Scripture, from the beginning to the end, to inculcate these two points, *viz.*, 1st. to put mankind upon the most vigorous activity in seeking and pursuing their everlasting happiness; and 2dly, to ascertain success to them in so doing. Is it not one of the first things you read in Genesis, after the Fall (4, 7), if thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? And the last in Revelations (22, 14), blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gate into the city; and whosoever will let him come and take of the waters of life freely.

Pray, Sir, let me ask you, are there promises, or are there not? If you say there are not, as your argument seems plainly to import, I must think we are laid under a necessity of being deceived; for surely no words can express promises, if those of the Scripture do not; they are certainly expressed just as they would be if God had designed we should understand them so. If you allow there are promises, pray where is the absurdity in supposing, nay, what else can be made of them, but that God designed to pass over a right, at least a conditional right to his creatures, of what he promises them? I own the matter of the promises is matter of mere sovereign free grace. Nay, it is matter of mere sovereign grace that God has in his blessed Son given us any promises at all: but surely notwithstanding this, when he has been graciously pleased to grant us

these precious promises, it must have been his design to pass over a right to us of the blessings promised; to which we could have had no right but upon the score of his mere grace in Christ. Which right therefore he has granted us (I allow) not to plead in the virtue of any thing we can do, but merely in the virtue of what Christ hath done for us, in whom alone it is that all the promises are Yea and Amen. 2 Cor. 1, 20.

In his right therefore we must plead, who has purchased this benefit for us, and not in the virtue or merit of any thing we do, which we can only humbly consider as mere qualifications necessary to render us capable of receiving what God in Christ hath freely promised. So that what we do must be considered, not in the assuming and challenging way that you represented in order to ridicule our doctrine, and as all that was in every instance possible to be done, but as what, according to the merciful terms of the New Covenant, God is graciously pleased in Christ to expect from such frail and imperfect creatures as we are, with all our temptations and infirmities about us. It was therefore very unjust for you to put things in such a ridiculous light as you did, to talk of owing, claiming, challenging, etc. Nobody ever dreamt of using such language to God, which could not become an angel, much less a fallen sinful creature, when the matter, and indeed the very being of the promises is matter of free grace. Consider things in this light, and then what sense is there in your categoric syllogism, and all your other reasonings on this subject?

But still you insist upon it that there is no promise to the unregenerate. Now as to this, I grant there is nothing promised to the obstinate sinner, persisting wilfully and unrelentingly in his sin and rebellion, that hates to be reformed, and casts God's words behind his back. But tho' there is nothing promised to him, continuing in that condition, yet it does by no means follow but that the promise is made to him upon condition of his repenting and returning to his duty for the time to come. Yea, but you will say, he can't repent and turn to God. I allow he cannot truly repent of himself without God's help. But then what I insist upon, is, that God has promised to hear and help him by his blessed Spirit, if he earnestly prays and strives in such a manner as may be expected from such a frail creature as he is. Tell me, is there no medium between an obstinate relentless sinner, and one that is thoroughly

regenerate, in your sense of the word, *i. e.*, that has gained the mastery of his lusts, and is universally in heart and life devoted to God in Jesus Christ? May not one who is not yet thus entirely devoted to God, be brought by the assistance of common grace (absolutely given in Christ to all) to be serious and really solicitous for salvation, so as being deeply sensible of his own guilt and weakness, earnestly to cry to God for help and to strive in earnest that he may be qualified for God's help? To me it is plain this may be the case of one not yet thoroughly converted from sin to God.

Now this is the man to whom I say the promises of divine efficacious aid or special grace do belong. This is he who hath, to whom shall be given, in our Savior's sense, Mat. 25, 29. And I am under an invincible necessity of understanding Mat. 7, 7, 11, 28, Luk. 11, 13, etc., as belonging to such as he. Can any one be so absurd as to interpret these promises thus: you that have already received the special grace of God, ask and ye shall receive: you who have already found mercy, seek and ye shall find: you to whom the gate of mercy is already opened, and are already got within it, knock and it shall be opened; you who have already got rest, come to me and I will give you rest, etc. Is not this making perfect nonsense of the precious promises of God? To me it seems nothing can be more so; and yet this must be your own interpretation, if you deny their being made even to the unregenerate, *i. e.*, to such as, being deeply sensible of their guilt and pollution, and utter inability to help themselves, are so seriously concerned to become renewed in the spirit of their minds, as to ask, seek, knock and strive that they may obtain the grace of God.

For God's sake, dear Sir, let us take care that we do not, from a violent attachment to any preconceived human schemes, pervert the plainest and most obvious declarations and promises of the Gospel. To me it is manifest, that this is what those on your side really do; and that your whole system, where it is peculiar, is not founded on the Holy Scripture (taken in the whole, and critically read and considered) but on the empty cob-webs of scholastical metaphysics (vain philosophy, science falsely so-called) together with some few obscure texts, not rightly understood, for want of a critical skill in the ancient languages, and the notions and controversies of those times, and for want of an exact attention to the scope and argument of the sacred writers; in consequence of which

you manifestly torture the plainest texts, to make them speak your sense, and so corrupt the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, and in effect make it a mere unintelligible riddle.

For my part, I cannot for my life help interpreting those and the like promises in this plain, easy and obvious manner: you that have not yet received the grace of God for the thorough renovation of your souls, ask and ye shall receive: you that have not yet found mercy, seek and ye shall find: you to whom the gate of mercy is not yet opened, knock and it shall be opened: you who are weary and heavy laden, under a deep and pungent sense of the power and guilt of sin, and can find no rest (as none can be had any other way) come to me and I will give you rest, *i. e.*, take my yoke upon you (my doctrines to believe, and my laws to obey) and learn of me (follow my example) and ye shall find rest unto your souls. And lastly, you who are deeply sensible of your weakness and great need of the help of God's Holy Spirit, ask, for he will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him: *i. e.*, to them that strive as well as seek, and watch as well as pray. Thus, I say, I am necessitated to understand these precious promises, and in faithfulness to our great Lord and Master, and to the souls which he hath made and redeemed, I am obliged thus plainly to interpret and inculcate them.

There were several other passages in your discourse that appeared to me very exceptionable; but I have done, and will only conclude with my earnest prayer to God, that he will open our eyes, that we may understand the wondrous things of his law; that what we see not he would teach us, and lead us into all necessary truth and duty! And let us earnestly beg that however we may differ in our speculations in some points, we may not suffer any thing to tempt us to a spirit of alienation and uncharitableness; but that unitedly following the things that make for peace and true holiness here, we may at length meet together in that blessed world where peace and holiness shall be consummated in unspeakable and everlasting happiness! Accordingly I remain, Sir,

Your real friend,
and very humble servant,

September the 10th, 1744. ARISTOCLES

POSTSCRIPT

I shall not be so unkind to you as to publish your answer, which

consisted of but few words, it being no ways fit for public view; but shall only subjoin the substance of my reply by way of postscript, to rectify mistakes, that no uneasiness or uncharitableness might subsist between us on that account.

One mistake is, that you seem to apprehend it my design to enter into a formal controversy with you on these subjects, by your expression of a duel with me. Indeed, Sir, if you thought so, you were really mistaken, for I assured you then, that it was with no disputatious temper or design that I wrote what I did; and I now assure you, that my main design was, that you might, if possible, be made sensible that most of the occasions of your uncharitable dispositions towards us, were really owing to your not rightly apprehending what our doctrine truly is: and I hoped if I could lead you into a right understanding of our manner of explaining the divine sovereignty and the promises of the Gospel, as consistent therewith, you would drop those dark thoughts you entertained of us, or at least have some charity for us, tho' you could not altogether think with us, as we have for you, tho' we cannot entirely think with you: for really there is nothing grieves me so much as that so bitter and uncharitable a temper should subsist and be propagated among Christians.

I might remark upon several passages in your letter; but there is one I cannot be content to pass by, and that is, your expression of being sanctified in the womb, wherein I suppose you allude to the like expression in Jer. 1, 5, which you seem to understand of the real inherent sanctification of the spirit; whereas it is manifest that God is not there speaking of real, but only of relative sanctification, and that all he means, is, that he had in his holy purpose set him apart, devoted or consecrated him to that sacred office of a prophet, to which he was now calling him.

Another mistake you labor under, is in apprehending that I aim at undermining some of the soul-humbling doctrines of the Gospel. To which I answer, No, Sir, God forbid! I firmly believe it to be the great design of the Gospel to humble the souls of men, and to subdue their perverse wills, and reduce them to an entire union with the will of God, to submit to all the sovereign appointments, and to take him in his own way, and be content to be saved upon his terms. This is plain from the whole run of my letter, and entirely consistent with it. I must therefore beg leave to suspect that you did

not read it with sufficient candor and attention, which I would yet wish you to do, rather than to persist in so hard an opinion of me, for which I cannot be sensible I have given you any just occasion.

But if you cannot think me altogether right in my notion of the sovereignty and promises of God, I beg you will not consider me as an opposer of the Word of God (as your letter seems to imply) for I am sure I oppose nothing, but rejoice in every thing, that (agreeable to the instructions of the Gospel) can tend to the everlasting happiness of the souls of men.

And if after all our well-meant inquiries, we cannot attain to think alike here in this dark and infirm state, let us however put the best construction we can on each other's conduct, and, as I said, hope at length to meet together in that happy state before us, where all darkness and prejudice shall be forever done away, and nothing but God and truth and love shall forever reign!

A / LETTER / To / MR. JONATHAN DICKINSON, / In Defence of / ARISTOCLES TO AUTHADES, / Concerning the / Sovereignty and Promises / Of God. / From Samuel Johnson, D.D. / God is Love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. St. Joh. 1 Ep. 4. 16. / The Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. St. Pet. 2. Ep. 3. 9. / Et refellere sine pertinaciâ, & refelli sine Iracundiâ, parati sumus. Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* L. 2. §. 2. / BOSTON: N. E. / Printed and Sold by Rogers and Fowle in Queen-Street. / MDCCXLVII.

DR. JOHNSON TO MR. DICKINSON

Sir,

When I consider the genius and temper of our holy religion, which breathes nothing but humility, meekness, benevolence and charity, together with truth, integrity, candor and well-meaning, and in a word, every thing that is amiable and advantageous in society, as well as honorable to Almighty God; I am apt to wonder that there should be any disputes at all about it, or any one article of it. But I am surprised and grieved that in the management of any dispute that may happen to arise, through the frailty of our nature, there should be any temper indulged that too manifestly savors of much self-sufficiency, and of much malevolence and bitterness of spirit, or that any method should be used that has too obvious a tendency to lead many of the honest and well-meaning people into mistakes, who cannot be expected to be able to guard against fallacious reasonings, or closely to attend to the real merits of the cause. If they go into any grossly wrong notions, or groundless and uncharitable separations, it is we that mislead them by such practices, and it is we that must answer for the fatal effects of them; and it must be said upon these melancholy occasions, these sheep, what have they done?

It is our business to watch with the utmost tenderness over the flock of Christ, and to take the greatest care that we do by no means say or do, any thing that may tend to lead them into any wrong

apprehensions of God, or any unchristian tempers one towards another, since we watch for their souls as those that must give an account. But how, I beseech you Sir, can we expect to give a good account of our ministry, if in the course of it, and especially in the most public manner, we have used means that have a natural tendency to inspire harmless, but unthinking people with a venemous spirit of uncharitableness, by leading them into very wrong notions of the best of beings, or of his Gospel, or one another, and quite besides the true state of the argument in any dispute that may happen to arise among us? If we teach them to believe in a God that does not mean as he says, and that secretly designed the misery of his creatures, while he requires conditions of their happiness, which it is impossible for them to perform, how can we engage them to love him, or expect in them any sincerity, well-meaning, fair-dealing or benevolence, or any thing but the utter reverse of these, either toward us or one another? I am sensible that we are too apt upon these unhappy occasions, to aim at the appearance of victory, rather than truth. But I hope I can truly say, that I am vastly more concerned lest the honor of God, and the true spirit of Christianity, and the reputation of our own order as ministers of that holy religion, should suffer through our ill management, than which of us should be thought to have the better of the argument!

It is, Sir, with great reluctance that I would admit of any disadvantageous apprehensions either of your good sense or well-meaning; but really, when I read your *Vindication of Sovereign Grace,* I confess, I am stumbled, and there arises in my mind a struggle between my opinion of the one and the other. I have too much opinion of your good sense to imagine that you can think there is any just reasoning in the greatest part of this pamphlet of yours; and yet I cannot bear to imagine that you would knowingly, and on purpose lead inconsiderate people into a wrong notion of the truth and right of the case. Now, Sir, I beg of you to help me out in this struggle; for I do honestly assure you that I am heartily willing to put the best construction I possibly can on every thing you say, and shall be truly sorry if in any thing I have misapprehended or misrepresented you, and beg it may be imputed to mere frailty or any thing rather than either insincerity or malevolence.

I have been unavoidably led to these melancholy reflections from observing the manner in which you manage this controversy both

with my brethren and me, which, as it appears to me, may, in a great measure, be reduced to these two heads. Your first care seems to be to beget in the minds of your inconsiderate readers, as great an odium as ever you can, that they may be prejdiced against every thing we say, and so disaffected as not to be qualified for giving an honest attention to the true merits of the cause. And secondly, when you are brought to the pinch of the argument, you artfully disguise the case, and many times ask us, "what we mean," by this or that, and then contrive a meaning which we never dreamed of, over which you will gain a cheap and easy triumph, while you are really fighting with nothing but a dust of your own raising. At this rate, there can be nothing that may not be answered, nor can there be any end of answering. And after all you have said, unprejudiced men of plain common sense, may find enough in the books you have been writing against, wherewith to answer every thing of any weight you have been offering against them. And I must beg of your readers, in justice to themselves as well as to us, if possible, to procure and read our books, which you have been so roughly handling, and consider the whole of them, and compare them carefully with what you have wrote against them.

Thus, with regard to the first instance of your way of writing, "my brother Caner is a blind guide of the blind. My brother Beach, is, 1. no true church-man, 2. no true Protestant. 3. no true Christian, 4. a mere madman, and besides himself, or one that knows not how to talk consistently with himself." Now Sir, are you really at sport in all this? Or have you truly this opinion of these gentlemen your self? I can hardly think you have. And would you then have unwary people have this opinion of them? If you would, I must assure them, you would have them think very untruly, and injuriously of them. And by the way, I would observe that this method of yours in raising an odium against an adversary is a very antiquated and unpolite way of managing a controversy. It was the fashion about the middle of the last century, and followed by some gruff sort of people since, but has, of late, been entirely disused, even in disputing with the infidels themselves, by all honest and polite writers, who attend to nothing but the real merits of the cause; and that for this good Scriptural reason, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. And if these gentlemen were indeed the poor, blind, popish, inconsistent creatures your discourse represents them to be, I beg to know

what all this is to the real purpose of the argument? It is not the persons, whether they be this, or that, or t'other, but the real point in question which alone deserves to be considered. What then can this method tend to but merely to prejudice people against giving them a fair hearing? And yet this is the main drift and tendency of above half of this extraordinary performance of yours.

But I go on to the consideration of what I am myself more immediately concerned in, the bulk of which you have left wholly untouched. And first, as to matters of odium, among which, the first thing I would take notice of, is your charging me with misunderstanding and misrepresenting the state of the question, between Mr. Cooke and me. Mr. Cooke, you say, "considers fallen man only as the object of God's sovereignty, and I, his creatures, as such," p. 65. Now to this I answer, it is nothing to the purpose of the argument whether Mr. Cooke or I, were the persons immediately concerned in the controversy, or whether I had exactly represented his particular notions or not. My business and design was under feigned names, to guard against the wrong notions of God and the Gospel that obtain in the country, and you know that I have not misrepresented the notions of multitudes among us at this day. However I will appeal to any one, that reads that sermon whether there are not many passages in it without this limitation; and to your own conscience, whether you yourself do not understand them as I do: which that you do, is plain from your own words, p. 74, where you say, "Thus I have considered the Dr.'s arguments against the sovereignty of God's grace, as represented in Mr. Cooke's sermon." And you very well know, that whether Adam should stand or fall, depended (according to Calvin and the Synod of Dort, which is yours and his doctrine)* as merely upon the sovereignty of God, as whether he or any of his posterity should ever be recovered. Whether man be considered as standing or fallen, alters not the case: the difficulty is only put a little further out of sight, but not altered or removed, since the sin and fall of Adam, as well as the sin and damnation of any of his posterity, must have been equally and arbitrarily decreed by him, who (as you teach) decreed or "fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass."

Another instance of this artifice of yours in disputing by raising an odium is in p. 69, where you say of me, "Does he then treat

* See Mr. Beach's *Answer*.

the dreadful majesty of heaven and earth with a reverence becoming his holy profession and character when he speaks of God's having a formed design of laying the greatest number of his creatures under a necessity of being miserable, and of his being acted by a most selfish view, and of his manifest double-dealing, etc.?'' Now I humbly trust, my brother Jonathan, that I have as great a reverence for the dreadful majesty of heaven and earth as you can be supposed to have; and I must think as much greater, as I am at the utmost distance from speaking of him in such a manner as this; and I know every intelligent reader and yourself too, must be sensible that I meant those expressions only as evident consequences of Mr. Cooke's and your doctrine. Yet this you have concealed in the manner of your setting them down, and left it so that the vulgar, who are the bulk of your readers, would be apt to think these were really my own sentiments in my own words, which if they were, they must be sure to raise in them a very great and just odium and abhorrence towards me. Whereas God knows, and you must know, that it was my utmost concern, and the great end of my writing, to secure the minds of poor mistaken people from entertaining such injurious and odious apprehensions of him, which they cannot avoid being tempted to, while they believe your notions of his sovereignty. You ought therefore, if possible, to have cleared these from being just consequences of your own doctrine (which I am persuaded you never can do), than to break out into such tragical exclamations, and leave people to imagine them to be my notions of the Deity, when they are necessarily implied in your own.

The last instance of this kind, I shall take notice of, is in p. 77, where you quote my words, God must know every thing as being what it is, necessary events as being necessary, and contingent events as being such. And you add upon it, ''I am surprised to find a gentleman of the Doctor's capacity talk at this rate! Does he indeed think there is any thing contingent with respect to God?'' Where, by contingent, you will mean uncertain, though I plainly meant events depending on the free actions of the creatures. Now Sir, I am equally surprised to find a gentleman of your capacity talk at this rate! Do you indeed think that I imagine there is any thing contingent with respect to God as you explain it? I cannot think you do. (Indeed I do not think there is any thing necessary with respect to God, besides his own necessary existence and per-

fections, and what necessarily results from them.) But why then, my brother Jonathan, and with what conscience, could you break out in this pretended, this awful surprise, unless it were to set people a-gaping at me, as a strange unaccountable mortal? And, in the name of all that is fair and ingenious, how could you quote those very words that I use in the same breath to explain myself, as though they militated against me? And pray tell me in your next (for I perceive you are to write again and again) whether you yourself do not think, as well as I, that God, to whom nothing is uncertain, does not know all things that are contingent (as well as necessary) with regard to us as being such? And then cease to be surprised.

By the way, before I proceed, it will be highly expedient, for the sake of common readers, to define these terms, necessary and contingent. Now events are then said to be necessary, as to us, when they derive from the settled course of nature, the laws of which are established by the free will, and invariably executed by the almighty power of God, having no dependence on you will, nor have we, at all, any power over them, though they are mere arbitrary constitutions of the will of God conformable to the dictates of his infinite wisdom, and therefore can be known to him only as being his own establishments. Such are, the descent of heavy bodies to the earth; the revolutions of the sun, moon and stars, and the return of the seasons and tides; the course of vegetation and sensation, and the condition and abilities of each individual, etc. But by contingent events, we mean such as depend on our own free wills and self-exertions; as that I am now writing, when I might, if I pleased, have been visiting a neighbor. These things, being fact, are as certain, and as certainly known, as the other; but it by no means follows that they are therefore necessary; nor can they be, because they immediately depend on our free wills (who are intuitively conscious of our free agency) and not on the will of God (any otherwise than as our existence depends on his will), who therefore does not know them because he wills them; but he therefore knows them because they are, by his intuitive knowledge, to which all things, at once are present, in a manner, indeed, which we can have no notion of, though we can demonstrate that it must be so. These things therefore are contingent as depending on the liberty of free agents, and when future are uncertain with respect to us, though they are certain with respect to God.

But his certain knowledge of them alters not their nature any more than our certain knowledge of them when they are facts, alters the nature of them; for he knows them as being what they are, *i. e.*, as depending on the free exertions of his creatures, according to that voluntary, self-exerting nature which he hath given them. So that your surprise is wholly owing to the confusion of your own ideas; your confounding necessity with certainty, and not distinguishing between contingency and uncertainty, and from your groundless imagination, that God can no otherwise know things than by his having willed them; which is the same as to say, it must be so merely because you cannot conceive how it should be otherwise.

This being premised, I proceed now in the next place to consider a few things (which indeed comprehend all the rest) that are matters of argument between us. Of which, I shall begin with that which is the foundation of the others, occasioned by this confusion of your ideas, and is thus expressed by you, a few words before this great surprise of yours. You tell us, "Unless we should blasphemously suppose a discord and jar among the divine attributes, a divine decree (*i. e.*, an act of the divine will) with respect to each individual person, necessarily follows from the fore-knowledge, or the infinite, eternal knowledge of God." Now, I ask whether there can be any other meaning to these words than this, that God's fore-knowing a thing to be, with respect to each individual, necessarily infers, that he must have willed it to be, or because he knows it, he must necessarily will it? *E. g.*, because God knew Adam would disobey, therefore he must necessarily have willed his disobedience; because he knew Judas would reject and betray Christ, therefore he must necessarily have willed his apostacy and treachery; and for the same reason he must necessarily will all the sins and crimes of each individual that ever were and will be committed in the world. Is this your doctrine, Sir? I believe, indeed you will not own it in so many words. But pray tell me, if it does not necessarily follow from it, and is not necessarily implied in it? Since you teach with the Assembly, that God hath foreordained, *i. e.*, willed whatsoever comes to pass. I beg leave to ask further, whether God does not always approve and take pleasure in every thing that he wills, and consequently, whether, according to your doctrine, he must not necessarily approve and take pleasure, not only in the death, but also in the sin of every sinner, which is both contrary to all his

moral attributes, to the whole Scriptures, and to what he hath sworn by himself, in Ezek. 33, 11. Now what greater jar, what more manifest discord, nay what more direct opposition can there be than this doctrine of yours makes between the natural and moral attributes of God? It shocks me, I confess, only to mention such horrid thoughts, which are infinitely impossible to be true: but I beseech you Sir, how can it be, but they must be necessary consequences of this your doctrine, that, "a divine decree, with respect to each individual person, necessarily follows from the infinite, eternal knowledge of God." I beg of you, for God's sake, dear Sir, who are so terribly afraid of blasphemy, that you will be afraid to assert such notions of the Deity as do necessarily imply it! For my part I can't but be of the opinion that God must know a thousand things with respect to the free, voluntary actions of each individual, which it was impossible for him to will or decree in any sense. In short, sin must, in the very nature of it, be the sole object of our own perverse wills, nor can it be the object of his will, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

And give me leave, Sir, upon this occasion, to suggest my fears, whether this doctrine, as you express it, does not unavoidably make the Almighty a necessary agent (which is indeed a mere contradiction in terms), for if God's decrees necessarily follow from his foreknowledge, must he not necessarily will or decree every thing that he knows will be, and if so, must he not necessarily act in every thing that is? For what is acting in the Deity but exerting his almighty will?* This notion therefore seemeth to me too plainly to infer that there can be no such thing as liberty or free agency in God, nor indeed in any of his creatures. If so, it must be of the same nature with that of Mr. Collens, one of the famous infidel authors of the *Independent Whig*, who gave out in conversation, as I was told by one present, that he had found out a demonstration against the being of a God.* And what should it be but what he published a few years after, *viz.*, what he called, *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity*, wherein he pretends to demonstrate that every action in every creature, is necessarily what it is; and his arguments equally prove, as he designed they should, that there can be no such thing as liberty in any being, whether God or

* So you yourself explain it, p. 67. Line *ult.*

* *Vid.* Advertisement to the *Minute Philosopher.*

creature, and he argues from that very same principle, which you, without any proof, take for granted, in p. 43, that "the will necessarily follows the necessary assent of the mind," or is necessarily determined by the last judgment of the understanding, as one ball is by the motion of another ball impinging against it. Hence he demonstrates, that there is no liberty, and all is fate; and thence it would follow, sure enough that there is no God; for by a God we must mean, is we mean any thing, an infinitely free, intelligent active being, who is the great creator and moral governor of the world. You may find the same absurd cause pleaded in the celebrated Cato's letters, written by Mr. Trenchard, another of those famous authors of the *Independent Whig*, Vol. IV, p. 168, etc., where he uses just the same arguments as you do here, and with the same inconsistency and self-contradiction. And I would wish you and your readers to read and consider well Mr. Jackson's answers to both these authors, where he will find a complete answer also to every thing you have here alleged, on this subject. I am really grieved, my brother Jonathan, that you should be found in such unhappy company, and that any of your notions should be so nearly connected with their doctrine of fate, which is atheism. At least, it is too plain, though I believe you are not aware of it, that you, with these authors, differ from us and the generality of Christians, especially those of the ancient church, in the very notion of a God. And I will venture to say, that I have too much reason to believe, that the God which some people have of late described in this country, as the God whom they worship, is not the God of Israel, nor the God of Christians. The liberty of the divine nature (as well as all his other perfections) is indeed a great, unfathomable deep; but, as we are intuitively certain of our own power of self-exertion and free agency, so we can demonstrate that God must be an infinitely free agent, together with his other natural and moral perfections, though it be infinitely beyond us to conceive of the manner of them. It must, therefore, surely be darkening counsel, by words without knowledge, to imagine, that asserting the liberty of the divine will, will infer a jar among his attributes, which you say, will be the case, unless his decrees necessarily follow from his infinite knowledge: the jar is not in his attributes, but in such idle notions as these.

I had said, as you quote, p. 66, 67, that Mr. Cooke's which is also your notion of the divine sovereignty does, in effect, represent God

as laying his creatures under a necessity of being what they are, whether good or bad, and consequently happy or miserable. In answer to which, you ask, "What does the Dr. mean by necessity?" Now Sir, in answer to this, I must say, I cannot for my life see how you could be at a loss to understand what I mean. And though I had clearly distinguished between necessity and certainty, yet after a deal of metaphysical chicane, which you make use of for two or three pages in order to misunderstand me, you will have it that all I can mean by necessity is nothing else but certainty. But, if you must yet be to seek for what I mean by necessity, I would let you know that I mean just what every man of plain common sense means by it, *viz.*, a state or condition of being in which a man is so placed, that however freely he may be supposed to act, it is absolutely out of his power, by any means that are allowed to him, to think or act otherwise than he does, or to be otherwise than he is. Perhaps you will understand me by some such instance as this. I will suppose some unhappy wretch, born under, and entirely in the power of an arbitrary sovereign prince (if it were possible I would suppose him his creature), who laid a command upon him which he was so wicked as to break, as it was before designed be should; or perhaps his great crime was to be be descended of a great grandfather who had disobeyed some command of his long before this poor creature was born, the sovereign, I will suppose had beforehand absolutely resolved he should be hanged: but for the fancy of the thing, or purely to please himself, and gratify a capricious humor of his, commands him to lift a weight of 10,000 pounds, and heave it to the distance of a mile, and tells him, if he will do this, he will give him an estate of 10,000 a year; and if he will not do it, he shall certainly be hanged. And at the same time, promises and designs him no manner of help or means whereby he might be enabled to accomplish it. It is true he speaks very kindly to him, and gives him several great encouragements, expressed just like promises. He tells him, if he will be up and doing he will be with him, and that if he will tug and strive and pray for help, his labor shall not be in vain. But he means these only for encouragements to put the poor creature upon the struggle, because he does not know but the sovereign means something by these encouragements, and perhaps may help him at this dead lift. However the truth of the matter at the bottom is that he

never intends to help him, having beforehand absolutely resolved he shall be hanged, and without help he can no more stir the weight than create a world. Now I humbly conceive (and I would submit it to your judgment) that this unhappy wretch is under a necessity of disobeying and being hanged. And I can't for my life think but every man of common sense must think so as well as I.

Again, for the further illustration of this business of necessity, I will moreover suppose, that this sovereign has, from his own certain knowledge and mere motion pitched upon two or three favorites among a 100 such criminals, upon each of which he is absolutely resolved to bestow an estate of 10,000 a year. He tells them, it is true, you deserve to be hanged as well as the rest; but if you will lift and heave this weight, you shall have the estate as above; and having certain engines in his power by which the weight can be easily raised and projected, he pushes them on in spite of their teeth, or (to use your own way of speaking) he invincibly influences them (under which invincible influence they are merely passive) to make use of those engines, which do the business for them. I know not what others may think, but to me it seemeth evident that these persons are under a necessity of doing what they do, and being what they are; for as the sovereign had ordered matters, things could not possibly be otherwise. I believe, Sir, you may by these instances understand what I mean by necessity. And pray tell me in your next, whether those poor creatures first supposed are not under an invincible necessity of disobeying and being hanged. And whether there was not manifest double dealing in the sovereign towards them? And whether any thing but a mere selfish view at gratifying his own capricious humor could put him upon such a management? And lastly, whether these instances are not just resemblances of your own doctrine? Not of the conduct of the Deity; no, God forbid! But of your representation of it. Only the case would have been much worse, if the sovereign could have been supposed to be the creator, father and author of them.

And now I have thus fairly explained what I mean by necessity, I beg leave, in my turn to ask you, Sir, in the name of plain common sense, what you mean, when you say, first with regard to the bad, p. 39, "He that necessarily continues a wicked creature, must necessarily, by that very means be the faulty cause of his own destruction?" Do you mean that a man can properly be said to be

wicked in doing what it is impossible for him not to do? Or that he is to blame for doing what he necessarily does, and can't help it? And that it is fit and right that he should be punished with exquisite and eternal torments, for doing what it was never possible for him to avoid, or not doing what it was never possible for him to perform? And 2ndly, when you say with respect to the good, p. 43, "Though there be no force in the case, yet the Holy Spirit invincibly influences the will, so that the sinner is necessarily though freely drawn to Christ," do you mean that a man can be said to be invincibly wrought upon without force? Or to be necessitated to act freely, or to act both necessarily and freely in the same act? *I. e.*, that it is possible for the same thing to be and not to be in the same time? I can't but think when you have fairly answered these questions, and cleared up those expressions so as to make plain sense of them, you and I shall soon come to a right understanding of each other.

I had said, that I cannot reconcile it with the wisdom, holiness, justice and goodness of God to give being to any of his creatures without putting them into a condition that would render being desirable to them, or to put them into a condition that is worse than not to be, but for their own personal voluntary fault in acting in opposition to his holy will, p. 73. This you say is "nothing to the purpose," with a 1stly, 2dly, 3dly and 4thly, all which I cannot think your intelligent readers will think anything to the purpose. However let them seriously consider, and try and judge for themselves. No, Sir, nothing, in my humble opinion can be to the purpose, but to establish those two principles, which I told you good honest Dr. Twisse, in his scholastical way, undertakes to maintain,* *viz.*, 1st, that it is better to be eternally miserable than not to be; and therefore, 2ndly, that it may consist with the justice and goodness of God to inflict exquisite and endless misery upon innocent creatures, *i. e.*, such as were never capable of formal or actual sin. In this now Dr. Twisse was downright honest; though I will not answer for the soundness of his intellect in maintaining these points. However he had sense enough to see that they were fundamental to his scheme, which was the same with yours, and Mr. Cooke's. And though I trust that you are an honest man too, yet perhaps it may be no great derrogation to doubt whether you are

* See his *Vindiciae Gratiae.*

quite so honest as he; for if you was, methinks you must have fallen to work as he did, upon clearing up these fundamental points; for who sees not, that if these be not true, yours must be false? You indeed ask, "Did not God when he gave being to man at first, put him into a state that was much better than not to be?" I answer, I believe so, Sir, but pray what is this to you, or to me, or any one else? Had we a being when Adam fell? Did we exist 70 years ago? Did he not make you and me as well as Adam? And did he not then first give us our being when we were conceived and born? Is he not the father of our spirits, and the former of our bodies? And as Job and David say, Hath not his hands made us and fashioned us? Were we not born just such creatures as he thought fit to make us? And did he not then put us into a state of being better than not to be, every thing considered? I, for my part am persuaded he did; otherwise I could not thank him for my creation, as I daily do; and so must every one else, I think, unless he will charge God foolishly. For fear of which, I dare not agree with the Assembly of Divines (whereof, if I remember right Dr. Twisse was Prolocutor) in their notion of original sin, as expressed in their larger Catechism. They say, it is such a corruption of our nature (meaning by nature that condition wherein we were born) whereby, say they, "We are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil and that continually." Now what is this but a description of devils incarnate, this indeed would be to be put into a condition infinitely worse than not to be — made utterly opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil! This is shocking indeed! And no help, no hope! Who could thank God for giving him such a being.* And accordingly even good Dr. Watts, in his *Ruin and Recovery*, pp. 368, 369, is so far misled by these unscriptural and unnatural notions of original sin, as to say, that "an intelligent creature cannot with reason bless

* We may reasonably thank God for our creation, altho' we find, we come into being in a much less perfect condition than we might have done if Adam had not fell, and though we are in a state much short of that original perfect law of our nature which is called original righteousness: for our being though imperfect, or less perfect, is yet desirable. How much better then is the moderation wherewith our church hath expressed this doctrine (who at the same time teaches us to thank God for our creation) in only saying, Art. 9, we are very far gone from original righteousness, and inclined to evil (*i. e.*, materially such, the flesh lusting against the spirit) than the Assembly in saying, we are made utterly opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil?

God or give thanks to the author of his being, for his existence, cannot thank God for creating him." Strange! that so good and ingenious a man, after so many rules as he has given to guard against prejudices, should be so far under the influence of them as to entertain and inculcate such doctrine, and such hard and unworthy thoughts of the Father of Mercies! For who sees not, if he will but a little consider, that it is impossible a holy and good God should produce such beings, and that, therefore, we cannot do him a greater injury and dishonor than to represent our nature as being made such as here described, when we first come out of his pure and holy hands? And I must say, it is really surprising that such a grave body of divines should teach such doctrine and allege a number of texts to prove it, which speak not of that condition wherein we were made or born, but of the condition of men who by their own actual sins had corrupted their ways by knowingly and wilfully living in all manner of vice and wickedness, as any one may see that reads and considers them carefully. It is indeed sorrowful to see, not only on this, but many other heads, with what a strange inattention and carelessness, even many divines read and quote the Holy Scriptures; first making doctrines out of their own heads, and then alleging a number of the mere sounds of Scripture to prove them, without any attention to the real sense of it! If there be some texts that, at first sight, may seem to sound harshly, relating either to original sin or predestination, we must not at all wonder at it; especially in a literal translation as ours is (the translators also, though great and good men, being somewhat biassed in favor of preconceived schemes), since it requires in many cases, very great critical skill to give a just account of the sense of very ancient and dead languages, and much care in laying the texts together on any subject; by which means, however, I must think there has, of late years, been a very satisfactory account given of all the passages that relate to these difficult subjects. And if there be some difficult cases in the course of Providence, that may occur to us in thinking on these subjects, arising from our partial views and narrow conceptions, we must not at all wonder at it, while we can see but a part of things, and therefore are not competent judges of the whole, and in this our present state are obliged to walk by faith, and not by sight. But for God's sake let us take care how we go into any interpretations, notions or hypotheses that do in the most odious manner reflect upon the best

of beings! I would give in to any possible supposition rather than admit of any notions inconsistent with his moral character. We cannot always say what is, but we may, and must, in many cases say what is not, and cannot be consistent with the moral attributes of God.

I had said as you quote, p. 75, that I think it necessary in order to speak intelligibly of the divine sovereignty, to distinguish between the consideration of God as a benefactor and as a judge: and that God acts as a sovereign only with regard to the bestowment or withholding of various abilities and favors on his creatures as pleaseth him, supposing first a condition of being better than not to be. Particularly with regard to mankind, his sovereignty appears in the bestowment of various abilities, favors and talents upon them, as proper means of probation in this life; and that, therefore, sovereignty has nothing to do with our being made absolutely happy or miserable in the life to come. For with regard to our future state, according as both reason and Scripture represent the matter, he acts merely as a judge in rendering us variously happy or miserable according as we shall have made a good or bad use of the various powers or talents committed to our trust in this present state of probation. "All this you say is very true, but it is difficult conceiving to what purpose it is alleged, unless to pull down with one hand what is built up with the other." I answer; to me it is plain, that in saying, "All this is very true," you give up entirely your and Mr. Cooke's notion of God's sovereignty, which consists in a mere arbitrary determining the eternal fate of each individual of mankind. It is you, therefore, who by this concession do manifestly pull down what you had been laboring to build. For your necessitating doctrine leaves no room for the being of any state of probation at all; it being a contradiction in terms to say, a man is in a state of probation whether he will do or not do, what he can't but do. Nor does it leave any room for God's acting as a judge at all, unless it be merely for an unmeaning show. For, according to you, he had absolutely and arbitrarily determined their eternal fate already before they had a being and had done either good or evil; and had so ordered matters that they could not avoid doing the good or evil which they had done. What sense or meaning then can there now be in his setting in judgment upon them. So that as I said in my former

letter, the 25th of St. Matthew, and such like texts, cannot, as far as I can see have any place at all in your divinity.

But you go on and say, "does not God act as a benefactor in the donation of his special grace to whom he pleases." Where, by special grace, you mean that sovereign, necessitating, invincible grace, as you call it, which was above represented. Now I agree, that if God does bestow such a grace he does it indeed as a sovereign benefactor, and that your notions of sovereignty and absolute decrees are effectually established: for what God does he doubtless decreed to do. For, as I said in my former letter, the right way of forming a just notion of God's decrees, is, to judge of them by the facts before our eyes. If, therefore, it be fact, that by the disposition which God hath already made, or by any necessitating influence of his on the one hand, or withholding it on the other, to each individual, the good are necessarily good and happy, and the bad are necessarily bad and miserable, God, doubtless absolutely decreed it should be so. So that, the whole controversy will undoubtedly turn upon this single point. But can you seriously lay it down for doctrine, that every wicked man that lives and dies in sin, is necessarily wicked and consequently miserable. This, indeed, must be the case, unless (as we maintain) God has in Christ absolutely given to every man a measure of grace to profit withal, which, if he will make use of, in such a manner as can reasonably be expected in his circumstances, he shall have more still, and more, as he uses it, till it issues in his recovery and happiness, according to Matthew 25, 29. I say unless you admit of this, every sinner that is destitute of this invincible grace, must necessarily continue such, and be eternally miserable; for we all agree that it is impossible for him to be reclaimed without God's help. If therefore God has absolutely resolved never to help him, he must necessarily die in his sins. But then who can blame him since it never was possible for him to do otherwise, and misery must have been the end for which he was made, and the design in giving him a being. But what mortal man that knows and loves God can endure such a shocking thought? It is therefore demonstration to me that you misunderstand the 9th of Romans, in the passage you quote, p. 78, as well as others you mention; because your sense of them is impossible to be true. And the meaning of that as well as others, is, I think, sufficiently clear, in the interpretation I gave of it, to which you

seem very little to have attended. But I refer you to my brother Beach's answer to your *Vindication* upon this and many other texts of Scripture.

And I can't but observe to you here, that I must think there can scarcely be a more mischievous doctrine advanced among mankind than this necessitating doctrine of yours; for it tends at once to destroy all religion and morality, and all civil and family government, and render them unmeaning and ridiculous things; for what signify all laws and rules of action, all motives taken from praise or blame, hope or fear, reward or punishment, while every thing we do is under a fatal necessity, and we can do no otherwise than we do. Let a child, a servant, or a subject be but possessed with this principle, that he can do no otherwise than he does, and in vain do you attempt to persuade him to do better, and it must be the greatest injustice to punish him for doing worse. And to what purpose should we pray to God or use the means of grace, if our fate is beforehand so immutably fixed, that if it should be already bad, these means can only make it worse? In short, in your way, we have nothing to do but to wait for this invincible grace, which if it never comes, all we can do will stand for nothing, and when it comes, it will do our business for us let us do what we will. And when once it has brought us into a good estate, we still have nothing to trouble ourselves about, for it is now as impossible for us ever to fail of happiness, as it was before to do anything towards it. So that throughout our whole lives, it has a natural tendency to tempt us to slacken all our cares and prayers and watchfulness. This I must think is really the case; and it is the greatest mercy, that these notions are so very absurd, that however people, through the prejudice of education, or from the authority of those they have a great veneration for, think themselves obliged to believe them in theory, yet from an inward, native sense of truth and right, they dare not venture upon them in practice.

You have indeed determined this question in the affirmative, and asserted (without either nature or Scripture to justify you, and as I humbly conceive in opposition to both, and to yourself too, you have asserted) that this grace is invincible, tho' you say, there is no force in it, but invincible it is, and therefore necessitating. And so he that is without it, is under a necessity of continuing in sin; for without this invincible grace it is impossble for him to alter

his state; as impossible as for a dead man to arise out of his grave. Where it is given it is arbitrarily given; and where it is withheld it is arbitrarily withheld; and where it is withheld the sinner can no more cease to sin, than he can cease to exist; nor is there any promise of help to his best endeavors. Is it not so, Sir, according to you? But can it indeed be thus? Is it possible, unless there be, as I said, a manifest double dealing in all the offers of mercy made to mankind? You say, indeed, p. 73, "The sovereignty of God's grace is no hindrance to any man living from a compliance with the terms of salvation: every one who is truly willing, etc., will be a partaker of it; and if he is not, whose fault is it?" True; but according to your doctrine, he cannot be willing without a sovereign invincible grace: and then, if he be not willing, it is merely because God does not think fit to bestow it. You allow, "He may accept if he will." Yea, but according to you he can no more will to accept than he can create a world. Pray see, Sir, what your argument comes to: can this be any thing else but tantalizing common sense.

For (that I may give a summary answer to the remaining part of your *Vindication*), tell me, I beseech you, are not these offers and encouragements (as you please to call them, tho' God calls them promises), are they not equally made to all, as well to the bad as the good, the reprobate as the elect? Was not Judas as much obliged to believe them made to him as Peter? But according to your doctrine, were they ever intended for him? Was not Judas to blame for rejecting them? But according to your tenet, was it ever in his power, with what grace was given him, to accept of them? I beg of you to speak out and answer me these plain questions; which if you fairly and honestly do, it is plain to me that you will answer all that you yourself have said here against the promises. And, for God's sake, tell me then, whether your doctrine does not, by unavoidable consequence, destroy the Covenant of Grace? For, does not a covenant, in the very nature of it, suppose conditions? And can there be offers and promises made with any honest meaning, to conditions impossible to be performed? Has God promised sovereign invincible grace any where in the New Covenant? Or is every one that is in a good estate, converted by a measure of grace that God never covenanted to bestow? It is so indeed, according to this doctrine of yours: but then what meaning can there be in a Covenant of Grace? And what will the infidel say to such representations of God and the Gospel as this doctrine

makes? Is this the God you would have me to worship? Is this the Gospel you would persuade me to embrace?

But let me inquire further: are not all baptized Christians in Covenant with God? May not they then, at least, plead the promises of God? You say no; unless they be already actually and indefectably good men. But tell me then what sense there can be in their being said to be in Covenant, if there are no promises made to them in that Covenant? What advantage hath the baptized person beyond him that is an alien to the Covenant of Promise? You say, "It is in Christ that all the promises are yea and amen, (p. 79) and wicked men are not in Christ, therefore there are no promises to them." I answer, it is true, wicked men are not in Christ in the spiritual invisible sense; but if they are baptized and not excommunicated, they are in Christ, as to their visible standing, being visible members of his visible body, and must be considered as being in Covenant, and consequently have, through Christ, a right to plead the promises of God's help to their sincere endeavors, while they continue in this present state of trial, and are favored with the New Covenant dispensation. And I must still maintain that they may sincerely pray and endeavor by the help of common or preventing grace, tho' their endeavors will not be effectual without God's further assistance, which I insist is by promise engaged in the New Covenant, and will certainly be granted on those conditions. And those promises, Mat. 7. 7, etc., will yet stand good to such, notwithstanding all the quibbles you make use of to elude them. But Sir, to me it is plain that you utterly misunderstand that expression of the promises being in Christ yea and amen. Does the Apostle say the promises are yea and amen, to those only that are in Christ? No, he says no such thing; he says the promises are in Christ, or (as the word in the original means) they are by or through Christ, *i. e.*, by his purchase, and through his mediation, they are yea and amen. To everyone; not to those only who are already in Christ, but to all mankind, they are yea and amen, *i. e.*, they are certainly to be depended upon.

But suppose all this were allowed, you will still reply, what shall we say of those who never heard of Christ? Are not they, by the sovereign disposal of Almighty God, laid under an absolute necessity of continuing in sin and being eternally miserable? See p. 66. I answer, by no means. It is indeed, by the sovereign dis-

posal of God (as I allowed before) that they are destitute of the inestimable talent of the Gospel, or the explicit knowledge of a Savior, which I never doubted to be consistent with the moral attributes and moral government of the Almighty; but I must not think that they are therefore necessarily sinful and miserable to all eternity. The Apostle's discourse, in Rom. 2. 13, etc., supposeth that they are in a capacity of doing by nature the things contained in the law, and that having not the law, *i. e.*, by explicit revelation, explaining it in all the branches of it, yet, so far as the light of reason or tradition extends, they are a law to themselves, and show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing them, *i. e.*, according as their behavior is conformable or contrary to the inward sense of their own minds or consciences (which to them is the law of God); but this could not be the case, if they were under an absolute necessity of living and dying in sin. So that their case, bad as it is, I hope, is not so utterly desperate and deplorable as you seem to apprehend it. But, I would humbly beg leave to ask you on this head, whether men may not be said to be saved by Christ who never heard of him? Or whether an explicit knowledge of Christ is absolutely necessary in order to enjoy the benefit of that redemption which he hath purchased? If you say so, I would ask, how then can any infants at all be saved? You doubtless allow some may; and that if they may be saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, being uncapable of it, why not others to whom it was equally impossible to come to the knowledge of him; not through any fault of theirs, for which therefore, they shall never have to answer, but merely by the sovereign disposal of the Almighty. And why may we not suppose and hope that God will deal with them according to the gracious tenor of the Covenant of Grace, purchased equally by Christ for all mankind, although they are not favored with the explicit knowledge and deals of it? Is he the God of the Jews only, says St. Paul, Rom. 3. 29. And I may, for the same reason say, Is he the God of the Christians only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Doubtless he is the common Father of all mankind, and the same Lord over all, is rich unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. (Rom. 10. 12. Psal. 145. 9.) And he hath expressly declared that, every man shall be accepted according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. (which is there set down as a gen-

eral and eternal rule of equity) and that he is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him (Acts 10. 34, 35.), doubtless through the great Mediator (who equally tasted death for every man, Heb. 2. 9.), though not explicitly known: for whose sake he will also make all the tender and merciful allowances for their unavoidable errors, mistakes and failings, which can consist with their being in any tolerable measure qualified for his favor.

If they have not the explicit knowledge of the Gospel, they shall never be called to an account for it; for where there is no law, there can be no transgression, Rom. 4. 15. As they have only the light of nature to guide them, so God will expect only such a conformity to it as their abilities and circumstances will admit of; for he is not a hard master, expecting to reap where he hath not sowed, or to gather where he hath not strawed. Mat. 25. 24. If having not known their Lord's will, so expressly as we do, they have done things worthy of stripes, they shall be beaten with but few. Luke 12. 48. And if they are not under advantage to be qualified for that blessed state it shall be the peculiar reward of good Christians; yet, I hope they may, multitudes of them be qualified for such a condition of being in another world, as shall be very desirable and capable of further improvement. Nay Christ tells us expressly, Mat. 8. 11, that many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven: when the children of the kingdom, *i. e.*, who were disobedient and impenitent, shall be cast out into utter darkness, etc. He moreover assures us (Joh. 14. 2.) that in his Father's house there are many mansions. There are therefore, undoubtedly inferior mansions for those that are, by his sovereign disposal, inferior, but well-meaning creatures, who, by his help, have conscientiously lived up to what light they had, as far as their frailty would admit (of which there have been many remarkable instances in the heathen world), as well as various higher and more glorious mansions for those who, by means of the peculiar helps and advantages of Christianity, had opportunity to be qualified for them. May it not be so? However they are in the hands of a good and merciful God, who is alike the Father of all immortal spirits; and in his hands we may safely leave them; in whom we may implicitly and securely confide, that he will find out ways to justify his own conduct, and that the judge of all the earth will do nothing but what is right,

and that every mouth should be stopped in the Great Day, not by dint of sovereign arbitrary and uncontrollable power, but, by an inward conviction of the equity, fitness and reasonableness of all his proceedings, with regard to the condition of every individual of his creatures. I would therefore, as I said, admit of any possible supposition, rather than of any thing that may so much as seem inconsistent with his moral character.

I will add no more but my earnest wishes that we may on all sides be above all things careful, for the sake of the love of God (which is my greatest motive in writing) that we do by no means advance or inculcate any notions or doctrines that may reflect dishonor upon that best of beings, and upon the Gospel of his grace, or be any ways deterimental to any of the souls which he hath made! And that I am, with the utmost sincerity,

Sir,

Your faithful friend,
And humble servant,
S. Johnson

New-Year's Day,
1746/7.

TITLE PAGE AND PREFACE, BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, TO "A SECOND VINDICATION OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN FREE GRACE INDEED." BY JOHN BEACH.

A Second / VINDICATION / of / God's Sovereign Free Grace Indeed. / In / A fair and candid Examination of the last Discourse of / The late Mr. Dickinson, entitled, / A second Vindication of God's sovereign free Grace. / Done in a Friendly Debate between / C, a Calvinist, and B, a Believer / Of mere Primitive Christianity. / By John Beach, A.M. / With a Preface by Dr. Johnson. / Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge. Job xxxviii. 2. / *Veteris Ecclesiae Judicium fuit, i. e.,* It was the judgment of the ancient church, that Christ provided an universal remedy for the universal sin of man by paying a price of infinite value, that no man might perish for want of it. Vossius. / All antiquity was contrary to this doctrine of the indefectibility of the saints. Vossius. c by Whitby. / BOSTON: / Printed and Sold by Rogers and Fowle in Queen-street. / MDCCXLVIII.

PREFACE

My reverend brother, Mr. Beach, hath so exhausted the subject in this controversy, and what he hath done is so well adapted to defend me as well as himself, that I shall give myself no further trouble than a short Preface, to remark upon a few things that may seem yet to demand something to be said in my vindication. And I would begin with saying, I am heartily sorry for the departure of our deceased antagonist, and am particularly grieved that he should be called out of the world in the heat of this controversy; for, as Archbishop Tillotson says (Pref. to Serm. Josh. xxiv. 15.) in this case, "methinks a man must be not a little out of countenance to find himself in this (disputatious) temper, translated into the calm and peaceable regions of the blessed, etc." I could wish he might have had opportunity to cool after so great a part of his life spent in wrangling against the church in one shape or other; and that, as far as I could ever see, without any just argument or fair reasoning; nor can I see any thing more like fair arguing in this last piece, than in any of the former, and still should wonder

that he could think it such, if it were worth the while to wonder at any thing. I know indeed great allowances must be made for human frailty, and the unaccountable prejudices arising from temper, custom, vogue, education or some untoward association of ideas which may strangely warp our minds and bias the train of our thoughts; though I should scarce think it possible were it not frequent undeniable fact, that any one's mind should be so perverted, as to be zealous to the last gasp, for doctrines, as fundamental, which evidently appear to me directly contrary even to strict demonstration. But as I know I need great allowances to be made for myself, so I am willing to entertain the most candid and charitable opinion possible of Mr. Dickinson, and could only wish for the unbiassed sentence of a good judge, that is perfectly disinterested, in the controversy between us. Indeed there is such a judge before whom he hath now appeared, and with whom I hope and trust he hath obtained forgiveness and acceptance, as Job's friends did after their groundless disputes with him; but I can't but think it must have been attended with some such a remark upon the cause he has been pleading against Mr. Beach as God makes on them, Ye have not spoken the thing that is right as my servant Job hath; though doubtless much of human frailty hath attended this dispute on both sides as well as that. And would to God we might all learn to write and speak both of him and one another, as it might be supposed we should if we knew it were the last we should ever speak or write.

I was particularly grieved when I came to his last words, p. 120, which he wrote in defence of Dr. Twisse, against what I had alleged from him, whose notion I take to be the most dishonorable to the best of beings that can well be imagined; and after all he has said, upon reviewing it, I cannot see it to be at all mended. The more I examine it the worse it appears; and I could wish my readers to examine and consider carefully that first digression of his second book in which he labors the matter to prove, "that it is indeed better to be eternally miserable than not to be, and that God may, consistent with his attributes, inflict exquisite and eternal misery, even upon innocent creatures." I know very well the Dr. pretended to answer Arminius, without needing to come to this extremity; but I must think after all his attempts, he has not done it; and that whoever will read him with care and impartiality, will be sensible that his talk is mere quibble, and that he would not

have undertaken to establish these two points so elaborately, if he had not been sensible of the deficiency of his cause without them; and indeed every one that is capable of thinking and will think, must see that these points are, as I said, fundamental to the supralapsarian scheme, and that the sublapsarian way, which Mr. Dickinson preferred, is evidently but a mere chimera, and only keeps the difficulty aloof and a little out of sight, but comes to nothing without going to the bottom of things in the supralapsarian way, which being founded on those principles is infinitely worse than nothing. And whereas he pretends I disguised the Dr.'s sentiments, by inserting an expression of my own by way of explication, I am content to leave the whole issue with any indifferent person that shall read that digression, and compare it with the account I gave of it. The idle distinction of absolute and ordinate power will nothing help it, and all endeavors to mend the matter will be found to be only attempting to wash the blackamoor white.

I was also grieved to find Mr. Dickinson spending some of his last hours in the several pages before those last mentioned, in writing over and over again what he had said and I had answered, about necessity, etc. I only desire anyone that would be impartial to read over again what I said, and I believe he will see in it a sufficient answer to what he has here repeated, and I leave it to any indifferent person to judge upon comparing us together, whether, what he writes, does not mainly consist of mere quibble, and look too much like a studied endeavor to disguise things, and seem to say something, without saying any thing to the purpose. It was obvious enough, when I said, there were thousands of things that God could not will or decree in any sense, I meant the sins of men, and after all the bustle he makes about this expression, has he proved the contrary? By no means: for to permit and overrule them does not at all imply the willing them. And one would think it impossible he should be in earnest in pretending that my doctrine led to fatalism, because I allow God's foreknowledge, which, he argues, must, according to my doctrine, depend on his will, or else, "some fatal destiny independent on God or man has counteracted his purposes and produced those events." P. 117. Strange! when he knew I had maintained, as the truth is, that they depend immediately, not on the will of God, nor on fate, but on the free wills of wicked men, and all that God could will was only to permit his creatures to act freely, but this does by no

means imply that he must will their wickedness, it being solely owing to their own wills. As to all he says here of foreknowledge, it is abundantly answered by Dr. Whitby in that large passage you will see cited by Mr. Beach. And as to his distinction of necessity into necessity of coercion and of consequence, it only still confounds necessity with certainty, which is all in effect that the latter can mean, so that I cannot see that it at all clears the difficulty. Though I freely walk rather than fly, I am under as fatal a necessity not to fly as I should be if I were bound down under a thousand weight of lead; and so is the wicked not to be good, if God never put it any more into his power to be good, than to fly above the moon or to breath at the bottom of the sea. As for my definition of contingency which he finds fault with, it is in effect the same with Dr. Watt's in *Philos. Essays,* p. 334. There is another distinction of necessity which may be of some use in this controversy, *i. e.,* into natural and moral. I am under a natural necessity of weighing towards the ground, and under a moral necessity of assenting to self-evident truth. The one is a necessity of the body, the other of the mind, and in both I am passive; my body to the force of gravity, and my mind to the force of truth; and, in my opinion, in both cases to the incessant exertion of the Deity himself, who in neither of them leaves us at liberty. It may indeed be figuratively said that I freely assent to evident truth, as I freely suffer the force of gravity, or the impression of light on my eyes, and as it is figuratively said we are drawn by the Father, and the love of Christ constraineth us. But who sees not that this is nothing to the case in hand? This indeed has been one of the chief occasions of all the mistakes and disputes in religion; *viz.*, the building doctrines on metaphorical and other figurative expressions. I must therefore still maintain that in a strict philosophical sense, will and action is free and under no constraint. Be my mind ever so much necessitated to assent to evident truth, I am nevertheless free to choose or refuse, to act or not to act, in consequence of this assent; for action according to the frame of our nature, ever springs from a self-asserting power. Thus it evidently appears to me, and without this, virtue and vice, praise and blame, reward and punishment, can have no meaning, but are empty names. And if any one will yet doubt and quibble, I can only refer him to his own conscience for conviction, and if he will but reflect and think, I am astonished if what I contend for be not self-evident.

And now as to your piece, Mr. M. D., I have two or three remarks, I would make on that. The first relates to original sin. And here the main thing I shall take notice of, is the ridiculous light you endeavor to put me in by representing me as preaching a sermon according to my doctrine in this letter, and then using the office of baptism directly after, which you suppose would appear utterly inconsistent with the doctrines of my sermon. p. 128. To which I answer, it is what I have often done, and yet nobody ever imagined any such inconsistency: nor indeed is there any more inconsistency between our office and my sermon, than there is in the office itself, which is none at all. For notwithstanding the expressions the church uses of original guilt, born in sin, remission of sin, delivered from the wrath of God, etc., at the same time she observes how Christ exhorteth all men to follow their innocence. Do you reconcile this last expression with the others, and then you will show the consistency of my prayers and my subscription with my preaching. You are always groundlessly affecting to make our church as well as our Savior speak your bitter Calvinistic sense; but certainly our Savior when he requires us to be converted and become as little children, and tells us, of such is the kingdom of God; and our church in using this expression of following their innocence, in explication of it, could have no notion of such a venomous nature as you and your Catechism suppose them to be born with. The truth of the matter is that by this expression of the innocence of infants, the church meant their entire freedom from what was then called formal sin, according to the scholastic language of those times. And this is all that we contend for, that infants are born as they are made, entirely without any formal sin, which ever implies a voluntary opposition of our wills to the known will of God, of which infants are evidently incapable. And therefore the church, by original sin inherent, which he calls the birth sin, could mean only what was then called material sin, meaning any want of perfect conformity to the perfect law of original righteousness, however unknown or involuntary, in the animal appetites and passions, which can be only materially sinful; hence she says lust or concupiscence hath the nature of sin, *i. e.*, the material not the formal nature of it, for it cannot be formal sin till some years after, when it comes to be indulged in opposition to a known law of God. And as to original guilt, all the church means by it is (according to the then received scholastic definition of

guilt) an obligation to suffer the punishment, justly inflicted by the wrath of God, for the sin of our first parents, we being all born under the curse then inflicted, and therefore are figuratively said to be born children of wrath, from which curse we are severally delivered by baptism, taking us out of the first Adam and grafting us into Christ. All this we ever allow and preach, and this, as I take it, is all the church ever meant in these public offices. And how vastly short is this of the strong expressions I objected to in your larger Catechism? And as to that expression of St. Paul in Rom. 1, of many being made sinners, who sees not that it is a figurative expression of the same nature with that of Christ's being made sin for us who knew no sin? You ask, p. 124, "What I assign as the true cause of the creature's moral imperfection?" I answer, if by moral imperfection, you mean (as you must if you speak of the imperfect, or less perfect condition in which it is made and born before it is capable of moral action), it is no imputation upon the Almighty to say he is the cause of it, meaning thereby that he now brings us into being with only a capacity of much less moral perfection than we might have been capable of if Adam had not sinned. He who is sole and sovereign lord of his favors, and delights in variety in all his works, may bestow or withhold what degrees of perfection he pleases; and as he at first made man a little lower than the angels, so now he sees fit in consequence of the punishment of Adam's sin, to make him, perhaps, a great deal lower than he made him at first; which he may be supposed to do without any impeachment of his attributes, since man with all his frailties, has even now a condition of being that is desirable, and (if he uses it well) capable of high improvements and great happiness. Otherwise, if by moral imperfection you mean formal sin, every man alone is the cause of that. For the rest I refer you to Mr. Beach's reply under this head.

In the next place I can't but remark, and with some wonderment upon the long talk you have at me, p. 130, upon occasion of my having intimated as tho' I thought the present translation of the Bible might in some things be a little mended. You make it a crime little less than Popery to suggest a scruple about the exactness of any passage in our English translation, as tho' it were *jure divino*, and to doubt of the entire perfection of it, were to undermine the Christian faith, stumble the weak, etc., and then, with great decency and good manners, you ask "Do the honorable

Society, Sir, from whom you have your bread employ you as their missionary to make such discoveries to the people of New England?" Indeed, Sir, I did not think of stumbling the weak by such an intimation, for I did not imagine there had been so weak a brother in New England as to be stumbled at it, nor one so weak as to think the translation, tho' a very good one, to be so entirely perfect as not to be capable of some little amendment. I think a translation should be as literal as possible; but as every language has its idioms and proverbial and figurative expressions, etc., peculiar to itself, he must be a great stranger in language that does not know that sticking too close to the letter, may in some cases a little disguise the sense of an author. And it is well known that as critical skill has increased, all expositors since have taken notice of these things, and in many places corrected the translation: so far was I from pretending to make any new discoveries. And it is much to be wished that our young students in divinity would procure and peruse such books as Blackwall's sacred classics, and especially a late excellent piece entitled *An Essay towards a New Translation of the Bible*. The difficulty of translating an ancient dead language is so great, that it is much more to be admired that our translators should have done it so well, than that in some difficult obscure matters they should be now and then mistaken. And we have reason to be very thankful that no main article of faith or rule of life suffers by it, every thing that is necessary being very plain. I own Calvinism much prevailed about that time in England, tho' it was not the principle upon which the first Reformation proceeded, nor did it prevail very long afterwards. Its period was within the Marian persecution, and the Restoration.

And now, Sir, if you would know my opinion of your performance in answer to my concession, "that what God in fact does he doubtless decreed to do" etc., I must think, and leave it with others to judge whether you have not fallen infinitely short of proving what you was to do, if you did any thing to the purpose, that God has in fact, laid any of his creatures under an absolute necessity of living and dying in sin, or of falling short of such attainments as he would accept of thro' Christ's mediation, in order to their being truly happy. And as to all your long talk about special grace and the promises, I must tell you freely that it evidently appears to me, as well as others who are better judges,

to be a perpetual course of quibbling and dodging and playing boo-peep on both sides of a contradiction. And as for your brother Mill's performance, which is much of a piece with yours, and which he calls a *Vindication of Gospel Truth*, pretending to show dangerous errors in my letter, I must think it should rather be called a disputation against the Gospel, showing the dangerous doctrines implied in those promises, ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, etc. Not that I need to concern myself much with him according to his own concession; for he says, p. 10, "The question is not whether there are conditional promises to sinners, not whether the sinner's encouragement to hope for the success of his endeavors (which he allows to be great and precious) rises in proportion to his diligence in the use of appointed means," whereas these are, in effect, all the questions that I know of on this head, between us; and in allowing these he grants all I contend for. And all his talk against these encouragements being called promises is plainly built on a misunderstanding of those texts, not by works of righteousness which we have done, etc. Who made thee to differ? etc. Where then is boasting? etc., and the opposition of grace and works (on all which see Whitby). And this misunderstanding of these and many other texts, still evidently appear to me to be owing to the want of just criticism, and to that old scholastical philosophy of the Roman Catholics, which perverted the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, being a system of many centuries later date than the Gospel itself, and was not at once purged away by the Reformation. Nor did I mean, nor ought he, as in his lamentable outcry, p. 32, to have charged me with, the least censoriousness or uncharitableness towards any Christians, in the censure I passed on that vain philosophy, which, when I know how things have gone, I consider rather as their unhappiness than their fault.

I never imagined but these promises, Ask and ye shall receive, etc., were made to the regenerate, to engage them to labor and ask for further measures of grace and favors which they had not yet attained, as well as to the unregenerate to engage them to labor and seek for that which may be called the lowest degree of a state of grace. And it is evident to me that as God (who considers all things as being what they really are) loves, or hates, approves or disapproves his creatures in various degrees, according to their real moral qualities (among which I comprehend faith and un-

belief), so there must be a great difference between his dispositions towards the obstinate relentless sinner and him that is seriously concerned and heartily labors to reform, though not yet thoroughly reclaimed, who must, in the nature of the thing, be supposed to have some degrees of sincerity and faith, though not yet to be numbered among those that are entirely the faithful. And accordingly, all the notion I can have of the promises and the whole purport of revealed religion (and I leave it to any person of plain common sense, not debauched with scholasticism, to judge who carefully reads the Bible; whether it be not right), I say all the notion I can have of the promises, etc., is, that they are an assurance given us in the Name of God, by his Son Jesus Christ, and through his merits and mediation, of God's grace and favor, and of his aids and assistances to his creatures, with all other spiritual blessings in various measures and degrees in proportion to their various exertions and qualifications; himself being in and through the same great mediator, the first mover and beginner of all that is good in them, without whom still they can effectually do nothing. Which notion utterly excludes all temptation to boasting, either in the regenerate or unregenerate; *i. e.* (according to his sense of the words), the good or the bad. It is therefore clear to me that his interpretation very much disguises and misrepresents the text, to him that hath shall be given, etc. The design of which, as the result of the whole parable of the talents, is evidently to set the Christian dispensation in the same light wherein I have here placed it. And upon the whole, I am content as before, to leave it with any unprejudiced person to compare what I have written with your answers, and to judge, whether what you and your brother Mills have been writing against, be not itself a sufficient answer to all that you have both been writing against it. At least I am persuaded he will find you both abundantly answered by Mr. Beach in the following pieces, to which therefore I refer the reader, and so take my leave.

S. Johnson

Part V

ECCLESIASTICAL CORRESPONDENCE

These selections from the correspondence of Samuel Johnson with Anglican clergymen and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts concern ecclesiastical matters. Letters of more general interest, though directed to Anglican clergymen, are published in Volume One. The philosophical correspondence with Bishop Berkeley is in Volume Two.

EXTRACTS FROM AN EARLY LETTER BOOK [1]

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO EDMUND GIBSON, BISHOP OF LONDON. JAN. 18, 1724.

Stratford, N. E.

. . . . I make bold in all humility to lay before your Lordship the state of this Colony of Connecticut to which your Lordship has licensed me. The people here are generally rigid Independents and have an inveterate enmity against the established church. But of late the eyes of great multitudes are opened to the great error of such an uncharitable and therefore unchristian spirit. This is come to pass chiefly in six or seven towns of which this of Stratford where I reside is the principal, and though I am unworthy and unmeet to be entrusted with such a charge, yet there is not one clergyman of the Church of England besides myself in this whole colony, and I am obliged to neglect the care at Stratford in a great measure (where there is business enough for one minister) to ride about to the other towns (some ten and some twenty miles off) where in lack of them there is as much necessity of a minister as there is at Stratford, especially at Newtown and Fairfield. So that the case of these destitute places, as well as of myself, who have this excess of business, is extremely compassionable. Now at the same time, my Lord, there are a considerable number of very promising young gentlemen, five or six I am sure, of the best that have been educated in the country, who might be instrumental to do a great deal of good to the souls of men, were they ordained, but for want of Episcopal ordination, decline the ministry and go into secular business, being partly from themselves and partly through the influence of their friends, loth to expose themselves to the danger of the seas and of distempers, for Mr. Browne's fate

[1] These extracts (pp. 217-223) are taken from a "Book of Letters written Chiefly to my Correspondents in England, from 1724 to 1727," in the Library of the New York Historical Society. They give a general picture of conditions in the church at that time. The letters are not all given in full, since they contain much repetition. Practically all of them begin with thanks for kindness and hospitality extended to Johnson during his trip to England. [The Editors.]

has been very terrifying, so that the fountain of all our misery is the want of a bishop, for whom there are many thousands of souls in this country do impatiently long and for want, do extremely suffer.

To Mr. ——— of Queens, Oxford. Jan. 25, 1724.

. . . . It is a pleasure to me at this distance to retain but a faint idea of that paradise you are so happy as to have for your constant abode, and I can scarce speak of Oxon without raptures, for I must allow that throughout the whole course of my life I never spent ten days with half the pleasure which I had during the little time I was there.

To General Nicholson. May 27, 1724.

. . . . The church gets ground daily, but many people are very much discouraged on the account of the unreasonable demands of the government in exacting rates from them to the support of dissenting ministers, on which account sundry persons of both sexes have been barbarously imprisoned, for they pretend that their schism is the established religion in this colony. And indeed they have enacted it so notwithstanding that their charter gives them no such privilege. From all which it appears that our chief misfortune is the want of a King's governor and a bishop.

To Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London. June 22, 1724.

. . . this town and indeed the whole colony is destitute of any Episcopal school, by which means our youth are trained up in prejudice against the Episcopal Church, and since your Lordship hath expressed so pious a care as to enquire concerning the state of the schools I have been encouraged to recommend this honest gentleman, Mr. Thomas Salmon, the bearer hereof, to your Lordship. . . .

To Mr. Talbot. Stratford, Dec. 16, 1724.

It was with a great deal of pleasure that I enjoyed the honor of your conversation here for which I again thank you and I hope you are long since arrived safe home.

According to what discourse passed between us here I have since had opportunity to inform myself of the disposition of people here, and I find (what indeed is terrifying to us all) that

that terrible thing Jacobitism will render it utterly impossible for anything to be done in these parts of the country. Since you went hence there comes from Boston a rumor that a Jacobite bishop hath gone through the country which frightens people very much. I hope, however, they are more sacred than hurt. It is a very melancholy thing that any difference of opinion in reference to the rights of princes should break the glorious body of Christ to pieces, and hinder that good which might otherwise be done to the souls of men. But so the grand adversary would have it. But I hope God will find out some way to heal the breaches of his church and ordain truth and peace therein, that we may at length with one mind and one mouth glorify God our Heavenly Father. There is some prospect of reconciliation, I hear, between Dr. Cutler and Mr. Harris of Boston,[2] which I hope will take effect. The Bishop of London in a letter lately threatens his severity against the maintainers of Jacobite principles. I beg an interest in your good wishes and ask leave to subscribe myself,

Revd Sir,

Your most humble and obedient

S. J.

To Mr. Berriman of London. Jan. 1, 1725.

Stratford, Conn. N. E.

. . . . The cause of our Holy Mother, the Church, gains ground here, but more I confess in the minds than in the manners of people because all the encouragements from this world are more against us than for us, inasmuch as he that declares for the church can have no expectation from the government and generality of people but to be laughed at and looked awry upon. . . . .

As to us we languish very much for want of bishops. Indeed we have a couple such as they are. The Nonjuring Church have sent Dr. Welton and Mr. Talbot here in that character. But they are very much neglected, all the service that will do will be I hope to move the government to send us such as will be acceptable both there and here. . . .

S. J.

2 Mr. Harris of Boston had been "persecuting" Mr. Cutler, accusing him of "insincerity, Jacobitism, and popery," and Johnson wrote in all the letters sent in this packet, condemning Harris and his malicious deceit. Johnson says Harris envied Cutler the appointment to the Boston Church. [The Editors.]

To Mr. Humphries, Secretary of the Society. Jan. 9, 1725.

Rev'd Sir:

I have received yours of Aug. 25 and therein inclosed the letters to Newtown and Ripton which I have delivered and am desired by them to offer their humble thanks to the honorable Society for their kind and generous notice of them. When they made those addresses to the Society and so for some considerable time since I came here, there was a more promising disposition among them than is now. But last summer upon their teacher's dismission the Independent faction of this county taking the advantage of our want of a bishop to supply them with a minister immediately, . . . they upbraided the poor people, persuading them that if the Church of England had been the true Church of Christ they would have sent one before now, prevailed with a very popular insinuating young gent (who himself would take orders if he could without going over the seas for them) to go among them, who pleaseth them so well that many of them, impatient for want of the ministrations of religion, are disposed to settle him in the Independent way. . . . (There has been a Nonjuring bishop through the country and some were disposed to get him to ordain their minister, if I had not taken what pains I could to persuade them of the danger of such a practice, and I doubt it will be difficult to keep people in the unity of the church without a loyal orthodox bishop.)

To Edmund [Gibson], Bishop of London. Stratford, Feb. 1, 1725.

My Lord:

I should not so soon have presumed to give your Lordship this trouble (for which I ask pardon) if I had not been informed that your Lordship hath seen a letter wherein the ministers of this country are represented as hotly contending about the rebaptizing those who were baptized among the Presbyterians, for which reason I beg leave to assure your Lordship that I have the honor to be acquainted with all the clergy of the governments of New England and New York but one and I never heard any of them open his mouth by way of controversy on that subject, nor that any of them ever did either plead for rebaptizing or practice it. And I believe all the foundation for this report is that a certain layman got a few of Mr. L—— 's pieces published here wherein there was some-

thing of that cause pleaded, and some of the clergy have taken occasion to implead it. And this is all that is true about that matter. Some of my people have been very earnest with me to rebaptize them and I find difficulty enough in satisfying them, but I hope they are so far satisfied that I believe they will not trouble me any further about it.

My Lord, your Lordship remembers that when we had the honor to wait on your Lordship we informed you of a design of the Nonjurors to send bishops to America, and now I find that design has taken effect, for there are two Nonjuring bishops in America. One of them travelled through the country last fall and not knowing who he was, but professing himself a minister of the Church of England, I persuaded him to preach for me and in the meantime I visited another of my parishes. The Tuesday following he let me know what he was, whereupon I was very much surprised and begged of him not to come into these parts of the country again. He seems indeed to be an ingenious gent and the people are mightily taken with him and if he should come this way again, as I fear he will, I doubt not I shall find difficulty enough to keep many of them in the unity of the Church. Thus your Lordship sees how unhappy our case is, that for want of a bishop of the Church of England people are in danger of running out of one schism into another and withal into a state of disaffection to His Majesty King George. I beg your Lordship's prayers and blessing.

To Mr. J. D———. June 15, 1725.

. . . . You hope I live in unity and peace with our dissenting brethren. Sir, I live in peace and love with them, have no uneasiness with them and cultivate a friendly correspondence with them as far as I am able, and that we are not in unity one with another is I think their fault and not mine. . . .

To Dr. Delaune. Aug. 10, 1725.

. . . . Indeed the want of a bishop is what is very discouraging to us and deterimental to our cause. For which reason we have lately had a meeting of all the clergy (excepting the perverse Mr. Harris and one or two of his creatures who do more mischief to the Church than the Dissenters themselves) and have in a body addressed the King beseeching that provision may be made, and

the motive which we hope will prevail is the danger which the country is in from the Nonjuring bishops which are lately come over. I am grieved to understand that a spirit of infidelity gains ground in England, from thence it is that I fear a blast on our hopes of a bishop. I pray God prevent it.

To Mr. Berriman. Aug. 12, 1725.

. . . . I cannot see what could move the good Dean you mention to think of settling himself in so obscure an island as Bermuda. Much more good might methinks be done here on the continent. And I wish seeing he is so piously disposed as to come abroad, he might be the gentleman who might be our bishop. God grant we may have such a blessing!

To Dr. Delaune at Oxford. July 1, 1726.

Since my last, sundry very good people have forced their way into the bosom of the Church through all their worldly temptations, and I hope more from time to time will so do. But it would appear incredible to you to be told what lies and slander their teachers use to defame the Church, such as these for instance: that the martyrs in Queen Mary's day were Presbyterians; that the Church of England is the most bloodthirsty and persecuting church in the world and has shed more blood than ever the Church of Rome did, and the like falsehood and nonsense, and all with such a solemn and sanctified brow that the poor ignorant people can scarcely be induced to suspect any deceit in what they say or do. . . . And scarce any day passes without some impression upon their minds for the better and I doubt not but that in God's good time (tho' it can't be suddenly expected) the Church will gain the ascendant.

To Edmund [Gibson], Bishop of London. Sept. 26, 1726.

. . . . They [the Dissenters] still boast themselves an establishment and look down with contempt on the poor Church of England as a despicable, schismatical and [. . .] that Charter is indeed the foundation of all their insolence and happy would it be for the Church if it were taken away, unless they could be made sensible that, (as the truth is) they have no warrant from it to do anything to the Church's disadvantage. I am not, my

Lord, for any severity towards the Dissenters, and always meet them with all the tenderness that becomes Christianity. But with submission I cant but think it very hard that the Church whereof our most gracious King is the [. . .] father, should not in any part of his dominions be at least upon a level with the Dissenters and free from any oppressions from them. There is another instance I will presume to trouble your Lordship with and that is this. Your Lordship observes in the Charter free liberty is given to all His Majesty's subjects to settle here in the plantations. Notwithstanding which they have made laws here to prevent strangers especially if they be Churchmen, from settling among them. As soon as any stranger comes into the town he is immediately according to their law warned to go out, and it is in the breast of the selectmen of the town whether they will accept of any bondsmen for him, neither can he purchase any lands without their leave, and unless they see cause to allow him to stay they can by their laws whip him out of town if he otherwise refuses to depart. By this means several Churchmen for no other crime but their profession have been prevented from settling here.

[End of "Extracts from an Early Letter Book"]

To Dr. Humphries, Secretary of the Society. Nov. 3, 1738.

November 3, 1738.

Rev'd Sir:—

Yours of the 28th of March I received not till about two months ago which relates to the state of the school in this town, and the answer I can truly give to it is as follows, *viz.*, Mr. Browne is a person of exemplary life and behavior and his attendance to his school was steady 'till about four months ago when upon a long course of sickness and several deaths in his family he did by my advice hire a young man, one Mr. Dean, to keep his school for one-half a year, who had had a liberal education and has performed with steady attendance and to very good acceptance. The number of scholars that attend our school are about 35 in the winter tho' not above 20 or 25 in summer. There are two dissenting schools within a mile but are both very full. Mr. Browne is by trade a saddler but has done little at this trade since he kept the school. I esteem him a valuable man and good schoolmaster.

(However it is not improbable but that he will after a while resign the school in favor of this Mr. Dean, who now keeps it for

him, if the Society shall think fit to employ him. As to my *Notitia Parochialis* it is contained in the enclosed scheme.

In my letter last spring I gave you an account of an address the people of the Church of England throughout this colony were about to present to our General Assembly relating to the new townships which were to be sold, and the money arising from the sale of them to be given towards maintaining dissenting teachers, excluding the Church, by which we apprehended ourselves injured, since that land appeared to us to be the common estate of the government and consequently the people of the Church ought to have their proportion in the advantage of the sale of it. That address was accordingly offered last May, signed by about 650 being males above 16 year old, but was not considered till this October Assembly, when in spite of everything that appeared to us reasonable they passed a negative upon our address, so that we are deprived of any advantage from the sale of those lands. This with some other things which will be laid before the Society has induced us to apprehend that the Society would excuse Mr. Arnold's voyage to England this fall, who will more particularly explain this affair, to whom therefore I refer you,)[3] and remain,

Sir,

Yours etc.

S. J.

To the Secretary of the Society. Sept. 10, 1739.

September 10, 1739.

Revd. Sir: —

I have but very little to write to you about the state of my parish. I can only inform you that since my last I have baptised 27 of which one was a negro woman, and 2 negro children, and admitted 8 to the Communion, and 3 families received to the Church, so that my *Notitia Parochialis* is as follows:

I. No. of Inhabitants is, Families above ---------- 400
II. No. of Baptised here and towns adjacent ---------- 496
III. No. of Adults since my last — a negro woman ---------- 1
IV. No. of Actual Communicants ---------- 105
Admitted since my last ---------- 8
V. No. of those that profess the Church of England,
Families ---------- 73

[3] The two paragraphs in parentheses were later crossed out. [The Editors.]

VI. No. of Dissenters — all the rest Congregationalists, Papists ---------- 3
VII. No. of Heathen, — about ----------10 or 12
VIII. No. of Converts, etc. No remarkable instances — generally sober regular people.
I am, etc.

S. J.

To the Secretary of the Society. Apr. 5, 1740.

April 5, 1740.

Revd. Sir: —

I take this opportunity to give you an account of the state of my parish. As to which I have only to inform you that since my last I have baptised 20 of which 3 are adults, whites, and 3 negro childen, and that I have admitted 7 to the Communion, and one family, otherwise my *Notitia Parochialis* is the same as in my last.

I observe in the account of the proceedings of the Society that there was a Bible and Common Prayer Book ordered for the village of Ripton belonging to my parish, but this is all the account I have had of them, having never received any letter about them nor the books themselves, nor can I, tho' I have enquired, hear anything of any such books being arrived, and should be glad to have some account of them. If the Society should think fit to send me some Prayer Books with Tate's and Brady's Psalms, and *Whole Duty of Man*, and Osterwald's Catechism, and a tract by way of dialogue (I forget the title) concerning the duty of frequenting the public worship, a dozen of each, I could make them very useful among my poor people.

We laid before the Society a complaint last spring of the difficulties we sustained from the government here, and Mr. Arnold had leave to come home to support our complaint, which he neglected to do partly by reason of the unsteadiness of his own disposition, and the uncertainty of his continuance in his mission here, and partly because we were flattered by some of the members of our Assembly that they would yet do something for our relief. This they still give us some hopes of, and we have concluded to wait till their next session in May, in hopes that we shall not have occasion to trouble the Society any further about it, after which if nothing be done in our favor, we shall at least send to the

Society the proper materials for the support of our complaint. But since Mr. Arnold has left us, being removed to Staten Island, it is very uncertain whether any of us shall incline to go home on this affair. This gentleman leaving his people will cast a great additional burden upon me on whom they will depend to administer to them till they are supplied again, on which account I beg the Society will favorably consider their address sent last fall, and still think of continuing that mission, and giving leave to some young man here to go for Orders for it, who might at least be considered as an assistant to me for a few years till he should be otherwise provided for. I remain, Sir,

Your most obedient etc.

S. J.

To Dr. Bearcroft, the Secretary of the Society. Oct. 14, 1740.

October 14, 1740.

Rev'd Sir: —

I wrote to you last April, and now again take this opportunity to give you an account of the state of my parish, which is in a pretty good condition, having since my last baptised 16, whereof 2 were adults, and admitted 14 to the Communion, and had 3 families added to the Church, people of considerable note in this town, but some have moved away.

I have not yet heard anything of the Bible and Prayer Book that was said to be sent for Ripton, and should be glad as I said, to know of whom to enquire further about them. And I beg leave yet to hope the Society will send me a dozen Prayer Books and *Whole Duty of Man*, and Osterwald's Catechism, and *Dialogues* relating to frequenting public worship, which I mentioned in my last.

As to the difficulties we labor under from the government we should gladly represent them if our commissary would think fit to put us upon it, but the distance we are at from him of 150 miles makes it difficult for us to see after things so regularly as might be wished. As to the complaint we designed to lay before the Society about the sale of the 7 new townships, I can only say that nothing is yet done about it, and what seems likely to be the event is that rather than let the church share in it the Assembly proposed to repeal the law that vested the several dissenting ministers in their

dividend of it exclusive of the church, tho' I imagine they will have some contrivance yet to serve themselves and exclude us — for the increase of the church in the country is very displeasing to those that are at the helm and disposes them to distress us all the ways they can, and particularly by explaining their law so in the execution of it as to oblige many of our people to pay their public dues to the support of their ministers if they happen to live at such a distance from our churches as renders a constant attendance impracticable, by which means some of them have been hauled to jail, and there been forced to abide till they paid the utmost farthing. The unsettled condition of some of our churches with respect to their ministers is also a great disadvantage to us. There is now a proposal that Mr. Beach should change with Mr. Arnold, and go to Staten Island and Newark. He is indeed a very worthy and useful gentleman, and nobody could do more good there than he, but then the loss of him would be an unspeakable damage to us here.

Mr. Morris is in many respects a gentleman of good accomplishments, but then it does not seem likely that he will suit or be suited with the disposition of this country people, so that I much doubt whether he will be happy in them or they in him, and wish he were better provided for, and that some young man previously acquainted with the country, or that could suit his disposition to it were provided for them.

I should not have troubled you, Sir, with these observations of mine upon the condition of things among us, but that I am troubled with the frequent solicitation of the people in these parts who look to me as being the senior missionary here to represent the difficulties and discouragements they are attended with, and should say more about them were it my proper business. But as it is not, I humbly ask pardon and shall only add my *Notitia Parochialis,* which is as follows:

I. No. of Inhabitants in this town, Of Families, I am told about ---------- 400
II. No. of Baptised here and places adjacent by the missionaries settled in this town ---------- 532
III. Since my last, of which 2 were adults ---------- 16
IV. No. of Actual Communicants ---------- 121
Of which admitted since my last ---------- 14

V. No. of those that profess the Church of England — Families ---------- 75
VI. No. of Dissenters — all the rest; papists only---------- 3
VII. No. of heathen only (except many unbaptised negroes) ----------10 or 12
VIII. No. of Converts to a sober life — no remarkable instances, generally a sober and regular people.

I am, Rev'd Sir,
Your most obedient etc. S. J.

To the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Not Much Otherwise to the Bishops of Gloucester and London. Sept. 29, 1741.

By Mr. R. Caner.

September 29, 1741.

I most humbly beg leave to introduce into your Grace's kind notice the bearer hereof, Mr. Richard Caner (brother to Mr. H. Caner a worthy missionary and much esteemed friend in my neighborhood), whom we have recommended to the honorable Society for a mission to Norwalk in his colony where one is much wanted, if it be practicable to found such a mission; or otherwise to provide for him as they shall think proper. And I can truly say in his behalf that he is a sober, serious and industrious young man and much esteemed by the people that desire him to be sent among them. But for the particulars of his case I will forbear to take up your Grace's time in rehearsing them, and beg leave to refer you to what his Rev. brother writes and to the representation we have jointly made of them to the venerable board.

I will only add that the exigencies of the church in these parts at this time are very particular by reason of the great progress of the most odd and unaccountable enthusiasm that perhaps ever obtained in any age or nation. For not only the minds of many people are at once struck with prodigious distresses upon their hearing the hideous outcries of a set of itinerant preachers that go up and down among us, but even their bodies are frequently in a moment affected with the strangest convulsions and involuntary agitations, which also have sometimes happened even without their minds being at all affected. The church indeed has not as yet much suffered but has in many instances gained by these strange commotions. But in order to this it is not only necessary that we who

are in the Society's service take much care and pains among the people, but also if possible that there be more laborers sent into the harvest.

I most humbly beg your Grace's prayers and blessing, and remain,

Etc.

S. J.

To Dr. Bearcroft, Secretary of the Society. Oct. 1, 1741.

October 1, 1741.

Rev'd Sir: —

I take this opportunity to write you by Mr. R. Caner of whom I have nothing further to say besides what we have jointly written in his behalf, only I will add that the exigencies of the Church in these parts at this time are something particular by reason of the great progress of the enthusiasm I mentioned in my last, which since then has strangely improved. For not only the minds of many — etc. (as in the former to Abp. till you come to the word harvest) [4]

As to my own people, they have hitherto been preserved entirely from this contagion while the Dissenters of this parish are pretty much infected, of whom several seem very likely by this means to be about retiring into the Church. I have only to add my *Notitia Paroch.*, which is as follows:

I. No. of Inhabitants in this town, as I am told,
In Families about ---------- 400
II. No. of Baptised here and in places adjacent by the
Missionary settled in this town ---------- 565
III. Since my last, of which one was adult ---------- 21
IV. No. of Actual Communicants ---------- 128
Of which admitted since my last only ---------- 4
V. No. of those who profess the Church — Families ---------- 79
VI. No. of Dissenters — all the rest; papists only ---------- 2
VII. No. of Converts to a sober life, no remarkable instances, they being generally a sober and regular people.

I am, etc.

S. J.

[4] See letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury under date of September 29, 1741, second paragraph. [The Editors.]

Appendix to the Above Letter to the Secretary.

October 4.

Rev'd Sir:—

After my letter to you as above I received yours of June 24, but I have not yet been so happy as to receive those copies of the collection of papers, from the Commissary, and dont know when I shall. It is at least a question whether I shall before winter, so that I do not know what the order of the Society is. In the meantime as my Bibles for Michaelmas are already gone and it will be unhappy for the person that bought then if the money is not paid, I would wish he might not suffer through my invincible ignorance. It is unhappy for us here in Connecticut that we are nigh 200 miles from our Commissary at Boston, being in another province, and the communication between them and us sometimes difficult and always wholly intermitted for several months in the year. However I shall as far as I am concerned exactly observe the rules of the Society as soon as they come to my knowledge. In the meantime, I remain

Rev'd Sir,

Yours, etc.

S. J.

To Dr. Bearcroft, Secretary of the Society. Mar. 25, 1742.

Mar. 25, 1742.

Rev'd Sir:—

Since my last the raging enthusiasm which I then mentioned has much prevailed in this country among the Dissenters and appears in many of them like a kind of epidemical frenzy attended with several strange doctrines on the fatal [. . .] destructive of all religion both God and Gospel. But thank God the Church save one or two instances has been yet preserved and the distractions of the times have in many instances been improved to open people's eyes and awaken their attention towards the Church as their only refuge to which four good families have since my last been entirely reconciled, and several others seem likely to follow them. But in order to prevent the mischief and make an advantage of it we are obliged to be continually riding and preaching. I have scarce ever failed all this winter of preaching three times, frequently four times, and sometimes five or six times in a week, and

this often not only in this town but in divers other parts of the colony. And there is this advantage arising from the madness of the times that it does remarkably engage people's attention to our preaching and administrations.

But it would be endless to tell of the dreams and visions, ecstasies, trances, revelations and conversions attended with fallings, swoonings, convulsions, terrors, joys, assurances and I know not what, together with endless confusion, lying and misrepresentation especially of the Church which the country is everywhere full of, while at the same time their indefatigable endeavors are used to unhinge all public order, so that it looks as if these enthusiasts would shortly get the government into their hands and tyrannize over us, in which case the best of the people of all denominations think they shall be under a necessity to implore his Majesty's immediate protection, although in the year 1725 such an attempt at Boston was judged by the Lord Justices to be an invasion of his Majesty's prerogative; yet our last Assembly ventured to order a synod or convention of the dissenting teachers to meet on occasion of these disturbances, which met accordingly but to very little purpose, the disorder having rather increased than diminished. The people of Symsbury have been of late persecuted for their rates to the dissenting teacher and building a meeting house, on which account several have been in prison and a law suit has commenced and we have no expectation that it will issue in our favor, and I believe we shall be obliged to seek for relief from home if there be any to be had. Mr. Thompson has officiated at Symsbury but not continued to reside there, as I expected he would having been employed nearer his home, and especially this winter at Waterbury. It would be happy for Mr. Morris and the places under his care if this honest useful gentleman could be employed by the Society as a schoolmaster and catechist at Westhaven and places adjacent with a salary of 10 or 15 pounds per annum to encourage which the people would gladly contribute and it might be depended upon that as he is much heeded and esteemed and at the same time well qualified for it he would do much good. I have nothing further to add but my *Notitia Parochialis* as follows:

I. No. of Inhabitants, of Families in this town, above------400
II. No. of Baptised here and in places adjacent by the missionary in this town----------580

III. No. since my last of which 2 were adult and 2 negroes-- 15
IV. No. of Actual Communicants----------130
Admitted since my last---------- 6
V. No. of those that profess the Church, Families---------- 84
VI. No. of Dissenters — all the rest; papists only---------- 1
VII. No. of heathen (except many unbaptised negroes) about- 10
VIII. No. of Converts etc. — no remarkable instances, generally a sober people.

I have drawn for this quarter salary on the treasurer a bill of the same date with this letter, and remain

Rev'd Sir,
Yours etc.

S. J.

To Dr. Bearcroft, Secretary of the Society. Oct. 5, 1742.

Oct. 5, 1742.

Rev'd Sir: —

The enthusiasm I gave you an account of in my last has something abated, which has been occasioned by the foolish and vicious conduct of some of their teachers, who have been discovered to go into some very odd familiarities with the women. The church has been so far from losing that it has considerably gained by the accession of three or four good families. The books I wrote for sometime ago, I see by the printed accounts, you sent but they have never yet arrived. I could make them very useful especially at this juncture if I had them. When you send me anything again pray direct it to the care of Mr. Charles Apthorp, Merchant at Boston.

Since my last Ripton people in this town have raised a church (which is the fourteenth in this colony) and they hope in time the Society will be in a condition to send them a minister entirely to themselves, where indeed there will ere long be a good congregation. Indeed ministers are very much wanted in several places, particularly at Symsbury and Hebron in which last place Mr. Dean is very acceptable as a reader and I beg the Society will be pleased to have it on their thoughts to provide for him in due time and especially for Mr. Thompson whom I mentioned in my last. And there are two others, Messrs. Southmaid and Cole, valuable young men, would gladly serve the Church in these parts if they could be encouraged to go home with those views. The Church increases

very much in several parts of the country, and I should be thankful if you will please to inform me whether the Society will be disposed to encourage either of these young men to go home for Orders, tho' it were with but a small salary. The government have made a law to restrain these enthusiastic rambling teachers, by which several are now in jail.

My *Notitia Parochialis* is as follows:

I. No. of Families in this town, above ---------- 400
II. No. of Baptised here and places adjacent by the missionary of this town ---------- 601
III. No. of Baptised since my last (of which 1 a negro child) ---------- 21
IV. No. of Actual Communicants here and at Ripton ---------- 150
Of which admitted within this half year ---------- 21
V. No. of those that profess the Church in this town — Families ---------- 87
VI. No. of Dissenters — all the rest; of papists only ---------- 1
VII. No. of heathen (except many unbaptised negroes) about 10
VIII. No. of Converts, etc., no remarable instances, they being generally a sober and virtuous people.

I have drawn for this quarter salary a bill on the treasurer of the same date with this letter, and remain,

Rev'd Sir,

Yours etc.

S. J.

THE EPISCOPAL CLERGY OF CONNECTICUT TO THE SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY. MAR. 17, 1747.

Norwalk, March 17, 1746/7.

Rev'd Sir: —

We the subscribers are met together at this place at the earnest cries and entreaties of the several people and persons following, whose cases we humbly beg leave to lay before the honorable Society. It is matter of great comfort that we see in all parts an earnest zeal in people pressing forward into the Church out of the confusion their Methodism has involved them in and think nothing too much to do that they may be qualified for the Society's notice, but at the same time it is difficult to us and them that we have not leave to send home in answer to their cries, like children for bread,

especially now there are so many vacancies occasioned by deaths and removals that the burden is intolerable. And in the first place as we are met in Norwalk we will begin with representing their case. As the Society had upon the removal of Mr. R. C. signified to Dr. Johnson that if he and Mr. Caner should intimate to the Society the necessity of a mission there and that they had procured a convenient house and glebe they might expect to have a missionary provided for them, they immediately went upon the affair, and have bought a convenient house and small piece of land close by their church and are now procuring a convenient tract of seven acres within about half a mile to be made over to the Society in trust for the use of their incumbent, which they purpose further to enlarge as fast as they can and from that time have by the advice of the clergy employed Mr. Leaming to read prayer and sermons in their vacancy, who has been generally very acceptable among them, and it is his and their earnest desire that he may have leave to go home for orders for them, with Ridgefield annexed together, who are already numerous and likely to increase considerably if he may be appointed for them, and they engage 20 pounds per annum.

In the next place we beg to represent the case of Stamford for whom Mr. Minor went home and died. These people who are above 80 families have also an earnest zeal for the Gospel in the truth of it, and have built a church and purchased a convenient house and glebe of seven acres and half, with a good orchard, five acres larger than common home lots in that town, and have for nigh a year and half had, by the advice of the clergy, Mr. Dibble reading to them who is entirely acceptable to them and they to him and there is nothing they have so much at heart as that he might be appointed their minister. Their expense, though mostly poor people, in building their church, their glebe and other charges in order to the settlement of a church, has amounted to 3500 pounds this currency, and they engage 20 pounds sterling per annum at least.

The case of Derby may be mentioned next as very pressing. They plead the encouragement given them by the honorable Society in a letter dated Sept. 28, 1743, giving them to hope that if they and Oxford would provide a house and glebe they might have a missionary, and it is hardly to be expressed with what zeal and earnestness both they and Waterbury desire to have each of them a minister. They of Derby have ever since been contriving to

provide a glebe, but have labored under many disappointments and difficulties, but have now purchased a convenient house and 9 acres of good land within ½ mile of their church at the expense of 415 pounds our currency which with 20 pounds sterling per annum is much for them to do being also generally a poor people. Since Mr. Lyons left them Mr. Mansfield has read to them for whom they have the greatest affection and an earnest desire that he may have leave to go home for orders for them, and he who is a worthy young man is well satisfied in them, and being related to many people in New Haven in which town he was born and is much esteemed he would be very useful in promoting the interest of the church there and here there is a good prospect and they offer 200 pounds to encourage him to go home for them.

As to Waterbury they also encourage themselves from a letter to Dr. Johnson and another to Mr. Morris 3 or 4 years ago to hope for the like favor upon the like considerations, and accordingly about 60 families being generally very poor have notwithstanding laid out themselves beyond what could be expected of them and have not only erected a church, but purchased a glebe of 37 acres (land being cheaper there than on the seaside) and built an house on part of it near their church and have also collected 200 pounds to encourage Mr. Alling to go for them with Westbury. This young man has also since Mr. Lyons left them read to them and they express a very great zeal and affection for him, and he is engaged with great industry to lay out his life in the service of the Church among them and they truly deserve the charitable notice of the Society.

Further above these in the country are Northbury (whose cause Mr. Morris pleaded and encouraged them to hope for the Society's favors by a letter from home to Mr. Cole, on which they procured a glebe of 30 acres) and Litchfield and other places adjacent in which the church has since greatly increased and they have procured a glebe of 100 acres and they would think themselves happy if Mr. Cole could be appointed for them, as would likewise Middletown and Hebron in which place a glebe is also provided and he has read in these places to their satisfaction. We mention the case of Mr. Cole last, but he and Mr. Dibble are first in our wishes to be provided for because of their age and standing, Mr. Dibble being above 32 having a wife and 4 children and Mr. Cole 37, and having been long waiting and doing much good service in a lay

capacity. He and the rest are all bachelors and have been all educated and graduated at New Haven College and always bore a good character for seriousness and sobriety, and such a measure of learning as can be had here, and are firm in their attachment to the Church of England and the present government and of more than sufficient age for orders. As these gentlemen have not that we know of had leave to come home we do not presume to recommend any of them [5] [First draft.] with any dependence of their being provided for by the Society. The others only wait in hopes of obtaining leave time enough if possible to go next fall of which we beg to have seasonable notice. As to Mr. Cole and Mr. Dibble, they are indeed going home with the commissary in hopes that by Governor Shirley's and his interest they may stand some chance of being accepted, Governor Shirley being engaged in the cause of Stamford, Mr. Cole having been encouraged to go by Mr. Morris, when he returned, who told him he would undoubtedly be accepted and he is willing to run the hazard at any rate rather than continue any longer out of the Church's service, especially as there are so many vacancies that greatly need to be supplied. But as for us we only presume to give them the characters they deserve in case the Society shall please to employ them.

[Second draft.] to the honorable Society until we may have leave therefor, but as Mr. Cole upon the encouragement sometime ago given him by Mr. Morris resolves to venture the expense of a voyage and the people of Stamford are so urgent with Mr. Dibble, that he is willing to continue sometime longer upon such a support as they have promised him, if he cant be better provided for, and in hopes of obtaining holy orders, to qualify him for greater usefulness among them, even without any assistance besides what that people will give him, though we dare not presume to recommend him to the venerable Society, we have recommended him and Mr. Cole who are resolved to go over together unto the Lord Bishop of London; being well satisfied of their good accomplishments, although we should have been glad if their circumstances would have allowed them to wait longer, in hopes of being sent for by the Society.

[5] From here to the end was rewritten. [The Editors.]

BISHOP SHERLOCK TO DR. JOHNSON. SEPT. 19, 1750.

London, Sept. 19, 1750.

Sir,

As I have written to the commissaries of the late bishop, to give them an account how matters stand here with respect to the ecclesiastical state of the churches abroad, I have ordered you a copy, and shall be obliged to you for any information you can give me.

I am your affectionate brother and servant,

Tho. London

(Copy)

Rev. Sir,

I have no excuse to make for the silence I have observed towards you and the other commissaries in the plantations, but only this, that I waited in hopes of giving you an account of a settlement of ecclesiastical affairs for the colonies, in some shape or other. I have been far from neglecting the affairs of your churches, and have been soliciting the establishment of one or two bishops to reside in proper parts of the plantations, and to have the conduct and direction of the whole. I am sensible for myself that I am capable of doing but very little service to those distant churches, and I am persuaded that no bishop residing in England ought to have, or willingly to undertake this province. As soon as I came to the See of London, I presented a memorial to the King upon this subject; which was referred to his principal officers of state to be considered. But so many difficulties were started, that no report was made to his Majesty. After this I presented a petition to the King in council of like purport. His Majesty's journey to Hanover left no room to take a resolution upon an affair that deserves to be maturely weighed. This lies before the King in council, and will, I hope, be called for when his Majesty returns to England. This is a short state of the case.

You will see by this account that I am not yet able to say anything as to the effect of these applications; but as in all events a new patent must be granted, either to the Bishop of London, or to a new bishop, I desire to be informed by you how the jurisdiction has been carried on during the time that the late Bishop of London. acted under a patent from the crown. I know the jurisdiction so granted extends only to the clergy; but with respect to this branch

there seems to me to be some defects in the patent. But I will not point them out to forestall your judgment, but shall be much obliged to you for any observation upon this head which your experience has furnished you with; which I shall endeavor to make use of for the service of the churches abroad.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

To the Secretary of the Society. Oct. 5, 1750.

October 5, 1750.

Rev'd Sir: —

I have nothing remarkable to write that is new with respect to the churches under my care here at Stratford and Ripton save that as migrations are frequent in these countries from older to newer settlements where land is cheaper there have several families removed from us since my last *Not. Par.* so that I have not that number of families and communicants I had then. I have been at Ripton six times in about nine months and I have visited several of the destitute places in which, and all the places I mentioned in my two last, the melancholy condition of the church is much the same as I then represented and the people are so urgent that we scarce know how to refuse recommending Colton and Camp for orders to my Lord of London, on such title as the people are willing to make and they to accept of at least for the present, *viz.*, thirty pounds sterling per annum. As to our petition to our Assembly for power by law to tax ourselves and collect our taxes independent of the Dissenters I am sorry to tell you that it is defeated. All the clergy and people besides the Reverend Mr. Graves were unanimous in it, but he could not see reason to approve of it thinking it best the law should stand as it is and we be subject to the Dissenters to tax us and collect the taxes though their law forbid a vote. However as the rest were agreed in it they thought proper to go on with it, but as he opposed it by writing to some of the members it was postponed till we had a meeting last fall when he objected to the draught that had been made and we agreed and at last he with the rest, as we thought, that a new draught should be made and to leave it to our attorney to make the draught as he thought best, only leaving out any mention of catechists which Mr. Graves objected to. But as the attorney who was the sole draughtsman in his draught petitioned for taxing and collecting

powers which Mr. Graves disliked he appeared at our last Assembly and entered his protest against it as what he called a spurious address. Upon this it was again laid by till this fall. And at our meeting last month he did not come but sent a draught of his own wherein he only petitions that the law as it is might be extended and not that we might have power to tax ourselves and collect our taxes for the support of ministers and let us know that if any other form of a draught was offered he should appear at the Assembly to oppose it. We were all of opinion that his draught was not sufficient because it left us still under the power of the Dissenters to tax us and collect without our having a vote in raising the taxes and choosing the collectors and therefore rather than have an open opposition before the Assembly we thought it best to drop the whole affair and still lie at the mercy of the Dissenters as we were though our case is very difficult. My *Not. Par.* is here subjoined and I have drawn on the treasurer to this Michaelmas, and remain,

Etc.

S. J.

Notitia Parochialis for Michaelmas, 1750:

I. No. of Families inhabitants within this town above----500
II. No. of Baptised here and places adjacent by me or my predecessor ----946
III. No. of Baptised since my last (of which 3 were negroes and 1 adult) ---- 26
IV. No. of Actual Communicants here and Ripton (of which 2 since my last)----192
V. No. of those that profess the Church, families here & Ripton ----143
VI. No. the rest called Congregationalists; papists none.
VII. No. heathen besides many unbaptised negroes---- 8
VIII. Converts, etc. No remarkable instances, being generally a sober people.

To the Rev. Mr. Beach. Dec., 1750.

Dear Brother:

I send you these papers for your perusal. You see a draft I made and by the general liberty you gave me I put your name to it, thinking I should not have opportunity to see you, and am glad of

this and that if you dislike it you would make another with what emendations you think fit and sign that.

The wench I had does not suit either my wife or my man, so if you know of anybody would have her I wish you would send him.

In haste,

Yours,

S. Johnson

THE EPISCOPAL CLERGY OF MASSACHUSETTS TO THE SOCIETY.

Nov. 28, 1750.

As the chief obstruction to the settling bishops in America arises from an apprehension here, that the several colonies abroad would be unwilling to have bishops among them, from a jealousy that introducing ecclesiastical power among them may interfere with some rights, which by custom or by acts of their respective assemblies, are now vested in other hands; it is become necessary in order to know their sentiments to inform them rightly in this case.

Their objections (if they have any) must be as is supposed, upon one or all of the following accounts:

1st. With respect to the coercive power such bishops may exercise over the people in causes ecclesiastical.

2nd. With respect to the interest or authority of the governors there.

3rd. With respect to the burden that may be brought upon the people of supporting and maintaining bishops there.

4th. With respect to such of the colonies where the government is in the hands of the Independents or Dissenters, whose principles are inconsistent with Episcopal government.

As these objections are all founded upon a misapprehension of the case; it may be proper to have it understood —

1st. That no coercive power is desired over the laity in any case, but only a power to regulate the behavior of the clergy, who are in Episcopal Orders, and to correct and punish them according to the law of the Church of England, in case of misbehavior or neglect of duty; with such power as the Commissaries abroad have exercised.

2nd. That nothing is desired for such bishops, that may in the least interfere with the dignity or authority or interest of the governor or any other officer of state; probate of wills, license for mar-

riage, etc., to be left in the hands where they are, and no share in the temporal government is desired for bishops.

3rd. The maintenance of such bishops not to be at the charge of the colonies.

4th. No bishops are intended to be settled in places where the government is in the hands of Dissenters, as in New England, etc., but authority to be given only to ordain clergy for such Church of England congregations as are among them; and to inspect into the manners and behavior of the said clergy, and to confirm members thereof.

It is proposed to the Society to recommend to such of their members as have correspondence abroad to acquaint their friends with these particulars in order to know the sense of the people there, when duly informed of the case: and to know what other objections they may have to the said proposal.

We the subscribers having read the foregoing objections are not able to recollect any others made by the Dissenters here against resident bishops in America, but what are herein contained; and notwithstanding these objections, we are heartily desirous that bishops should be provided for the plantations, and are fully persuaded that our several congregations and all other congregations of the Church of England in New England are earnestly desirous of the same.

Timothy Cutler
Ebenezer Miller
Henry Caner
Charles Brockwell
William Hooper

Boston, New England
November 28th, 1750

Samuel Johnson's Draft of Statement to the Society. Fall, 1750.

In Answer to Proposals about Sending Bishops.

As there have been sent over by some members of the Society to these parts a scheme of proposals relating to providing bishops for these countries and some account is desired concerning the state of things here and the sense of the people and what other objections there may be that are not already obviated, and one of these papers hath been sent to the Reverend Mr. Dibble, one of our number, we

humbly beg leave to give our joint testimony relating to this affair which is as followeth:

1. That we should have been glad if an Episcopate could have obtained among us in its full vigor as at home, but such is the distress and shocking condition of religion for want of a regular Episcopacy that we should be glad above all things in this world that a true Episcopate might obtain in these countries in any shape.

2. That we humbly apprehend our dissenting brethren are really their own greatest enemies as well as ours in opposing bishops being sent into the country for their case is very deplorable among themselves since the late enthusiasm hath thrown them into so many feuds, contentions, and separations, which the awe of a bishop would we believe tend much to abate and reduce them to a better state of unity in their own way (as well as to reclaim many of them) for which reason we do from conversations we have some of us had with them know it to be inwardly the hearty wish of several of the wisest and most moderate of them both of clergy and people that bishops were sent into America.

3. That we know of no objections they can have but what would be sufficiently obviated by such a scheme as is proposed, besides the general notions they have against the church, by which we humbly hope the government at home will not be influenced even for their own sakes as well as ours for the reasons above given.

4. That the very cause of Christianity in general suffers and will suffer more and more extremely, to the great advantage of infidelity, for want of the influence of some great and worthy person in such a superior station to stem the torrent whose wise and good conduct would in such a country as this be of great weight.

5. That we verily believe the Dissenters would in a little time be entirely easy under such a scheme as is proposed and that it would be every way of vast advantage to the Church and the interest of religion in general as well as the political interest of the nation.

6. That there are some imprudencies, to say no worse, and some little idle controversies obtaining among some of our own clergy that very much hurt the church and religion in general, which the awe of a worthy bishop would entirely put an end to as well as contention and disorders among the people. Indeed it is beyond imagination to conceive how much weight an Episcopal visitation would

have to promote the true interest both of religion and government even if it were but one in five or seven years.

To the Secretary of the Society. Oct. 14, 1751.

October 14, 1751.

Rev'd Sir: —

This will go by Messrs. Camp and Colton who deferred going last spring and are in a little time to embark this fall and I here enclose Mr. Browne's letter of resignation to conclude next Lady Day. These candidates go recommended only for orders and have no expectation from the Society. I however beg your kind notice of them and as I said in my former letter whether the Society can think proper to add five pounds more to this fifteen now resigned and divide it between them I humbly leave to the wisdom and goodness of the venerable board. The church here is much defamed and hurt by an impudent scribbler, one Hobart, who writes both against the Society as misapplying their charities and us as imposing upon them; an answer to whose first piece by Mr. Beach I desired Mr. Barclay to send you which I hope may have come to hand, and he has again prepared for the press an answer to a second piece in which I among others am censured as imposing on the Society in supposing my son continued still in pay two or three years since he continued to do duty at Ripton, because his name, I suppose through inadvertence, still continues in the list and I desire it may for this reason be discontinued for the future and also Mr. Browne's. It hath been a time of uncommon mortality in these parts and among them we much lament the loss of our good benefactor Mr. W. Beach, who in addition to what he did in his life hath bequeathed to the church 500 pounds our currency towards purchasing a glebe lot.

I have drawn on the treasurer to this Michaelmas and my *Not. Par.* is as follows, by which it will appear that we have lost more communicants than added.

I. No. of families inhabitant within the bounds of this town above ---------- 500

II. No. baptised here and in places adjacent by me or my predecessor ---------- 969

III. No. baptised since my last (of which 1 was a negro and 1 an Indian) ---------- 23

IV. No. of communicants here and Ripton (of which 6 since my last) ---------- 187
V. No. of those that profess the Church here and Ripton, families ---------- 143
VI. The rest called congregationalists; Papists none.
VII. Heathen, besides many unbaptised negroes ---------- 8
VIII. Converts to a sober life, no remarkable instances.

I am, Sir, etc.

S. J.

To the Secretary of the Society. Apr. 2, 1752.

April 2, 1752.

Rev'd Sir:—

I have very little to say of the condition of my charge here at Stratford which is much as it was when I wrote last, only I have baptised 13 within this last half year and admitted 11 to the communion. Nor hath the church much altered in the whole in this colony save that it hath so far increased at New Haven that they have this winter got timber to build a church of the dimensions of 60 feet by 40 besides the steeple and chancel. And as this is a place of very great importance on account of the college being there, it would be very happy for them if the Society were able to assist them in providing for a minister, as I doubt they will not be able to do more than 25 pounds sterling themselves especially while building. The church is also gaining at Guilford and Branford and so also West and East Haven who being but ten miles asunder propose to join for the present procuring a minister to whom they would engage 25 or 30 pounds and there is some prospect of two worthy candidates for these places. But if the Society be not able to assist them they must perhaps be content for the present with but one over them all. I herewith send you a copy of Mr. Beach's answer to Mr. Hobart. I have drawn on the treasurer to Lady Day, and am, Sir, etc.

S. J.

Bishop Secker to Dr. Johnson. Feb. 27, 1752.

St. Paul's Deanery, London, Feb. 27, 1752.

Good Dr. Johnson,

I am very sorry that I have neither performed your desire of

procuring a degree for Mr. Chandler, nor answered your letter sooner. But I hope you will see reason to excuse me. On his first application to me, I engaged the Bishop of Norwich to ordain him, with the Bishop of London's approbation; for I was going myself into Oxfordshire. There I mentioned your request on his behalf to several heads of houses, who promised their assistance, but wished he had brought a certificate of the degree which he received abroad. About the same time he wrote to me, to desire that I would ordain him; because he believed the Bishop of Norwich would be too much engaged with the Prince of Wales. I returned him answer, that the bishop had promised me to do it; and that I was for some time otherwise employed in my diocese; taking it for granted, that he would afterwards come to Oxford, as he had told me he intended. But I heard nothing more of him, till, on my return to town, Dr. Bearcroft told me that he had been ordained by the Bishop of Norwich, and was gone back. Still I apprehend the degree may be obtained, on transmitting a certificate of that which was conferred on him in New England, and a recommendatory letter from one or more of the Episcopal clergy; which may be directed either to me, or to the Bishop of Bristol, who is likewise Dean of Christ Church.

You receive, I doubt not, constant accounts from Dr. Bearcroft and others, concerning the state of the Society's affairs here. Our fund is reduced at present very low; and the last year's benefactions have been very small. God incline the hearts of men to liberality at the approaching general collection. The King hath given five hundred pounds. I wish it had been more. But I know not whether his predecessors have given anything. I am reprinting, on this occasion, my sermon before the Society, in hopes it may do some good; and shall give a copy to each minister of a parish in my diocese. It will be of use to us to receive, as early as possible, both accounts and copies of whatever is printed in your parts, relating to the concerns of the society. The Dissenters here have lately had some things of this kind before us; and I think we have had them only through their hands. Concerning the important scheme of establishing bishops abroad, I can, at present, give no encouraging prospect. We must endeavor again when we see opportunity; and pray always, that He who hath put the times and seasons in his own power, would, in the time that He sees proper, revive that, and every part of his work amongst us; for indeed religion continues to

decay most lamentably. But we know, that all things work together for good; and that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

I am, with great esteem and regard, Sir,

Your loving brother and humble servant,

Tho. Oxford

BISHOP SHERLOCK TO DR. JOHNSON. APR. 21, 1752.

London, April 21, 1752.

Rev. Sir,

I am very much obliged to you for your letters of the 26th of March and 25th of September, 1751. I have, for above a quarter of a year, been under a fit of the gout, which has disabled me from attending to business; otherwise you should have heard sooner from me.

The observations you communicated to me, with relation to the settlement of Episcopacy amongst you, are very just, and worthy of consideration; but I am afraid that others who have more power and influence, do not see the thing in the light that we do, and I have but little hopes of succeeding at present.

I think myself at present in a very bad situation; bishop of a vast country, without power, or influence, or any means of promoting true religion; sequestered from the people over whom I have the care, and must never hope to see. I should be tempted to throw off all this care quite, were it not for the sake of preserving even the appearance of an Episcopal Church in the plantations.

Your letter of the 20th of October last, sent by Messrs. Camp and Colton, came but lately to hand. I thank you for it, and particularly for giving me some light into the quarrel between Mr. Graves and Mr. Colton. Mr. Graves wrote to me a very bad character of him, but could not conceal his passion and resentment, charging him with very heinous crimes. His letter gave me great offense, as he will find when he receives my answer.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate brother and humble servant,

Tho. London

To Dr. Bearcroft, Secretary of the Society. Apr. 2, 1753.

April 2, 1753.

Rev'd Sir: —

I shall not need to trouble you with many words this spring as I have been but little abroad this winter and there has not been much alteration since my last here at home. I have only baptised 12 and admitted five to the Communion and six families added. Mr. Newton seems like to do good service at Ripton where he reads, and is settling himself and purposes to go for orders in the fall. My son continues to read and catechise at West Haven where and at New Haven the church seems increasing. There is one thing I would beg leave to submit to the Venerable Board. It has been wisely made a condition of the Society's favor that the people provide an house and glebe. Now as it is the prevailing disposition here in the country that every man must have an house of his own so those that settle in the ministry choose to provide a piece of land and build a house for themselves, and the people willingly assist them in building, I would therefore humbly suggest whether it would not be as well for the Society to expect only a glebe, and not to insist on a house, provided each people procure as much more glebe land as the house would come to? As the late enthusiasm is much abated, free thinking as it is called which is worse, takes place of it, and now Chubb, Tindal and the *Independent Whig* grow much in vogue, who do more mischief than the others, so that we have now these fatal principles chiefly to oppose and guard against.

I have drawn on the Treasurer to this Lady Day, and my *Not. Par.* is as follows. I am, etc.

S. J.

Not. Par. for 1753.

I. No. of families inhabitant within the bounds of this town above ---------- 500

II. No. of baptised here and places adjacent by me (of which 60 by my predecessor) ---------- 1009

III. No. of baptised since this half year (of which 1 negro woman) ---------- 15

IV. No. of Communicants here and Ripton (of which 5 since my last) ---------- 189

V. No. of those that profess the Church — Families here and Ripton above ---------- 150

VI. The rest call themselves Congregationalists; Papists none.
VII. Heathen very few besides many unbaptised negroes.
VIII. Converts to a sober life — no remarkable instances being generally a sober people.

A Letter of July 13, 1753, Appended by William Smith to the London Edition of Johnson's *Elementa Philosophica*.[6]

A Letter containing Some Impartial Thoughts Concerning the Settlement of Bishops in America. By the Author and Some of his Brethren.

Sir: —

We thank you for your particular account of the unhappy controversy at [. . .] We likewise heartily condole with the congregation of [. . .] in the loss you tell us they have sustained of the young gentleman who was intended for their minister, in his voyage to England for his orders. They had been long destitute. Their expectations from him were justly great, and perhaps they will not soon be supplied so much to the satisfaction of all sides.

Your observation is too just, that the Church of England, in America, is in a very distressed state, for want of proper discipline and a regular Episcopate. It has been long observed and lamented in vain by every friend to genuine religion and piety; and we hope you'll embrace any opportunity that may offer of setting this matter in a just light in the land for which you are bound. Perhaps, now at last, some good may be done; for surely, our lamentable situation deserves the most serious attention.

Not to speak of the laity of the Episcopal persuasion, who are under no check from church discipline, it is impossible, but amongst the clergy themselves, who are a large number of men, left in a great measure to their own discretion, some needless controversies and imprudences of behavior, not to say worse, must happen and continue, to the great hindrance of religion, and scandal of the church. Now against these there is no effectual remedy, but the authority and visitation of a bishop; for it is found, that the power delegated to commissaries is insufficient for this good purpose.

But further, tho' it is observed that men born and bred in America often make the best clergy there, owing perhaps, partly to their being acquainted with the genius of the people, and partly

[6] See Volume II, p. 345. [The Editors.]

to their knowing before-hand what sort of livings they are to expect, so as not to be soured with any disappointments, as is sometimes the case of those who come from home with high hopes; yet the risk and dread of the seas are great discouragements to the breeding up men for holy orders in these parts.

It must greatly shock a parent's tenderness to think, that after all his care to educate his son, he has but five chances to one of ever seeing him again, if he goes to England for his ordination. It will be of little avail to tell such an affectionate parent, that in the common course of things, there are a great many more chances in his favor, when experiences and past observation for a number of years tells him that five of twenty-five that have gone from America to England for orders, have either been cast away or have died of the small-pox, etc. Beside it is justly to be feared, that some of those who escape all these dangers, should in time to come, acquire and carry back with them certain sentiments and seeming refinements of conduct which are not very winning to the simplicity of the vulgar in the country.

Thus while every other religious society in America is a complete body, flourishing under full discipline and government, the Church of England languishes in a dismembered state, and without discipline, because without a head, or which is the same thing, at too great a distance to receive any succor from him who is her head and guide. All the advantages of her excellent constitution, far from being useful, are rather prejudicial to her, because she wants that member with whom the chief power of rendering them useful is lodged.

For this cause the Church of England must lose ground in America, in proportion as other persuasions prevail and flourish. And yet it highly concerns the peace and good government of America, that she should at least keep pace with other religions here, as being best suited to the genius of English government, and as having always made the mildest use of power. It is certain that in proportion as Episcopal congregations have been settled among those called Independents, their principles of religion have become more generous and catholic, and their principles of government more monarchical and constitutional. The different religious persuasions in America have been considered as a check to one another; and if it be justly thought that a sudden introduction of episcopal juris-

diction, into those more northern colonies which are chiefly in the hands of Dissenters, would hurt the civil constitution which is there adapted to the principles of such a people; so should the Dissenters on the other hand, obtain the chief power in the southern colonies, it would as certainly hurt the constitution of them, since their government is adapted to the spirit and principles of Episcopalians, in whose hands they now are. Thus if the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Dutch, and Germans in America, should all unite in power, as has been long projected by some enterprising spirits, under the very catholic pretence of having been all reformed on the same Calvinist plan, what other power in these parts could stand before such a formidable coalition; or how could the constitutions and peace of the southern provinces be maintained? We said unite in power, for this is possible; but it is hardly so, that Presbyterians with reformed Germans and Dutch, who all differ from one another, and split daily into new separations, especially the former, should ever unite in heart.

We know it will be said, that all the coalition aimed at is that they may all unite, as differing in nothing material, to love and support one another with good offices, and consider themselves as one church of Christ. But if this is all, why is any persuasion that names the name of Christ to be excluded from such a desirable union? Why is it confined to Dissenters, with German and Dutch Protestants? Is the charity and benevolence of Episcopalians, Quakers, etc., less remarkable than that of others? Who would not wish to see love and harmony among all Christians? Who would not wish to see the Germans and all foreigners settled in our colonies, so far united not only with Dissenters, but with all Englishmen, as to speak our language and pursue one British interest with us? But to meddle with their religion is not the way to effect such an union: it is the way to keep them forever at a distance from us. And to think of molding them exactly to the mind of this or that American synod is a chimera.

Those gentlemen then, who talk of such a coalition, had better candidly acknowledge that they do not so much hope to have the foreigners join with them in the same mode of religion as to have the power of leading them, and of collecting all their force to serve some favorite purpose. And as it is not the first time, that those who

have but just escaped the jaws of persecution have taken the first opportunity to lift the rod against others, so should ever this power fall collected into such hands, it would do much greater mischief to the political balance and springs of government, and be the source of far greater ecclesiastical tyranny than has ever been apprehended from a full Episcopal jurisdiction over all America, which has been very unjustly said to be aimed at in the settlement of bishops here.

It will appear from the following proposals, the substance of which was sent from England to some of the episcopal clergy in America, that nothing more is desired by the settlement of bishops here, but to put the Church of England on an equal footing, and render her as complete a church as any other in these parts. And how reasonable, necessary and expedient this is, in a political as well as a religious light, may appear from what has been said. No ecclesiastical tyranny is wished for, nor any thing that can in the least interfere with any rights, either by custom, or acts of assembly now lodged in other hands.

I. In the first place 'tis thought two bishops would be sufficient: one for the continent of America, whose seat would most conveniently be New York, on account of the healthiness of the climate and its central situation; and the other for the West India Islands, whose chief seat might be Barbadoes. If settling such bishops should be thought to interfere with any rights of the See of London, they might be suffragans to it.

II. No coercive power over the laity is in any case desired for such bishops, but only a power to regulate the behavior of the clergy that are in Episcopal orders, and to correct and punish them according to the law of the Church of England, in case of misbehavior or neglect of duty. To this there can be no objection, as it is a power already given to commissaries in these parts.

III. Probate of wills, licences for marriages, etc., are to be left in the hands where they are; and the bishop is to enjoy no share of temporal power, nor to interfere in the least with the interests, authority, and dignity of governors, or any other officers of state.

IV. The colonies are to be at no charge in the maintenance of the bishop; nor is he to have any other authority in places where the government is in the hands of Dissenters, but to ordain clergy

for such Episcopal congregations as are among them, and to confirm the members of the same, and inspect into the behavior of their clergy.

These are no greater powers than every other American church enjoys (whether lodged in one or in twenty hands matters not). They are powers too so essential to the constitution of a church that there can be none without them. No one then can reasonably oppose the settlement of bishops in America, under the foregoing restrictions, but such as wish to see Episcopacy entirely rooted out of these parts. And how detrimental this would be to the political balance of America, to the constitution of the Episcopal governments here, and to the spreading the knowledge of Christ over the dark parts of the earth, is manifest on the least cool reflection. The very spirit of religion and the civil harmony of America seem to depend on laying the Church of England under the same advantages with other religious societies here. Thus, whatever ground is gained or lost by her or them, will be gained or lost only by fair means and a noble emulation to excel each other in every thing that is winning in the impartial judgment of the good. And while they are all thus in a healthy and complete state, whatever advantages may be gained by any particular denomination, they will be so slow and imperceptible as not to hurt the civil government, but in the same slow and imperceptible manner to adapt it to such changes and to the genius of that religious denomination that thus gradually gains ground.

Surely it cannot be thought that the settling bishops in British America has the least tendency to make her too considerable, or raise her too fast from her infant state. If it shall have any influence at all on civil matters, which by this plan must be very small, it must rather be the contrary way. Such bishops will owe their advancement to His Majesty. They will have but small revenues, and may hope for greater promotions at home. Thus, with whatever influence they have, they will from gratitude, inclination, and interest, go all reasonable lengths to support His Majesty's and the British interest in the colonies.

V. Having thus removed every objection that can be formed against this good work, it is to be hoped it will no longer meet with any obstruction from any person that considers the foregoing powerful reasons for it, with many more that might be added. But

if the happiness which the execution of it would, in the issue, undoubtedly give to millions, should for the reasons of state which we dare not guess at, be left for the glory of succeeding times, it may, in the mean while, be a great relief to the distressed state of the church and religion, to engage and commission one or other of the youngest and ablest bishops of the smaller dioceses, to visit America at least once in seven years. Such a bishop might spend one or two years in these parts, in order to ordain clergy, give confirmation to those that desire it, and perform the other parts of his office in the visitation of as many of the clergy as possible; duty being done for him by some neighboring bishop during his absence.

We are, etc.

July 13th, 1753.

To Dr. Bearcroft, Secretary of the Society. Mar. 25, 1754.

March 25, 1754.

Rev'd Sir: —

My *Not Par.* you have herewith, by which it appears there has been no remarkable alteration since my last. One Mr. Keyes, our late clerk, a worthy man, has lately died and left a decent wooden house of four rooms and half an acre of land to the church only reserving his widow's life in it. And as to the general affairs of the church in these parts, one Mr. Palmer, a dissenting minister of good character, and estimation among them, hath lately conformed to the church upon honest principles, whom New Milford and Litchfield and places adjacent, where the church much increases, depend upon to go for orders for them. Mr. Newton continues to read at Ripton and the church increases, and I conclude these gentlemen will go together, but perhaps not till the fall. Mr. Punderson's being placed at New Haven and his report of Pitts has occasioned a pretty fierce opposition to the church in these parts, and especially in the gentlemen of the college where the president is so severe that he will not allow the pupils of the church (who are a tenth part of the college, the number about 100) to go to church, two of which are Mr. Punderson's own sons. This has occasioned several pretty sharp letters between him and us, and I hope we have something softened him; but if he persists we intend to complain to our next Assembly, and if they negative us we purpose to lay our complaint before the Society, and shall wish it to go before the King and Council. It

seems to us an insolent treatment to deny our children a public education unless they will constantly attend their meetings, when we have a church within a few rods of the college, and our people bear their proportion in supporting the college.

Mr. Camp proves a worthy and useful man at Middletown, etc., and can be but very poorly supported. I wish the Society would be pleased to contribute to his better support. I also extremely pity poor Hebron, that good people are yet destitute and no candidate appears to go for them. I wish some encouragement could be given them. At Norwalk things seem unhappy though Mr. Fowle is said to preach well and live innocently; but I fear he has not conducted so desirably as might be wished, so they are grown very uneasy, and I wish he could find some other place.

The gentlemen of New York have for several years been projecting to establish a college in that city, and have been raising money for that purpose, and now are resolved to carry it into execution speedily. They have all along been frequently expressing their design that I should be the head of their college, from which (upon a visit I made there last fall) I sincerely endeavored to my utmost to dissuade them. Notwithstanding which they have lately unanimously chosen me to be their president and assure me they cannot be agreed on any other method, and that my refusal will (by the virulent opposition of a free thinking and dissenting faction) much endanger the miscarriage of their design; and it seems to be the general persuasion that it is my duty to accept. This appears very strange and even shocking to me considering my great want of proper qualifications at best for such a business and especially considering my advanced years. However I have engaged to make them a visit in May, in order to consider the matter more nearly, and I confess it looks not improbable that I must eventually be prevailed upon to accept. In view of this it hath been considered what must be done for a successor here. It is generally wished my son would succeed, but he rather chooses to go with me and he is not of age, and so that it is thought most proper that Mr. Beach should succeed me considering the burdensomeness of his mission to his infirm health and advanced years, in which case my people would be entirely satisfied and his people very easy, provided Mr. Dibble could succeed him, whose necessities urge strongly for a better mission on account of his large and increasing family. This would

induce him to accept if his people could be provided with a worthy successor, but this is the difficulty that a proper candidate does not yet appear. Indeed here are some worthy men who would take orders if we had a bishop here but are induced to go into other business rather than undergo the hazard and expense of such a tedious and dangerous a voyage, which is the case of some of our best youth. So great, so prodigious is the detriment it is to the church and religion that we cannot be favored with a resident bishop! In the meantime it is proposed that the neighboring clergy with the assistance of my son (who continues to do duty as a catechist) take turns to supply my absence till the fall, and we humbly beg the Society's approbation of our proceedings and that we may have leave to make what alterations shall be thought necessary and practicable and to send home a candidate in the fall to supply whatever vacancy shall be made. My brethren here seem very anxious at the thoughts of my leaving these parts and desire that the concerns of the church in this colony may still pass through my hands, and indeed I cannot avoid being tenderly concerned for the church in these parts where I shall leave my oldest son besides many other friends and relatives, and therefore humbly hope the Society, if I should move, will still permit me to correspond with you in what relates to its public weal.

I have drawn on the Treasurer for the time being (not knowing who he is), for my salary to this Lady Day to be paid to Messrs. Bromfield and Blamire, druggists in London, and I remain,

Rev'd Sir,

Your most obliged and most obedient humble servant,

S. J.

Not. Paroch. for 1754.

I. No. of inhabitants within the bounds of this town — families considerably above 500

II. No. of baptised here and places adjacent by me (except 60 by my predecessor) 1021

III. No. of baptised since my last (of which 4 negro children) 12

IV. No. of Communicants here and Ripton (of which 4 since my last) about 180

N. B. Several heretofore reckoned are now within Mr. Punderson's district.

N. B. 517 have been admitted communicants here and

places adjacent since the mission by me, except 74 by my predecessor.

V. No. of those that profess the Church here and Ripton, families above 150

VI. The rest call themselves Congregationalists; Papists none.

VII. Heathen very few — many unbaptised negroes.

VIII. Converts, etc. — no remarkable instances, generally a sober people.

ARCHBISHOP SECKER TO THE REVEREND DR. JOHNSON. SEPT. 27, 1758.

Lambeth, Sept. 27, 1758.

Good Dr. Johnson: —

I have received a very obliging letter of congratulation from you and ten more of the clergy of the provinces of New York and New Jersey, for which I desire, not knowing any other way, to return them my thanks by your means, who stand so justly at their head; and whose private affliction in the loss of your excellent son, I hope God will recompense with much public usefulness.

His providence hath permitted me to be raised, without seeking or wishing for it, to a high station; in which, I have by far a greater prospect of undergoing difficulties and uneasiness, than of doing good or enjoying comfort. But my gratitude to His Majesty and his ministers, for their favorable opinion of me, must not and shall not be the less. And I promise myself the prayers of all pious persons, related to this nation, that I may be enabled, inclined, and directed to do my duty. In the concerns of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, I have scarce taken hitherto more than a common share. Some further attention is required of me now and I shall endeavor to give it in the best manner that I can; depending greatly on the information, advice, and assistance of the missionaries and other clergy in our colonies, but on yours in particular.

There are many things, of which it is needful that the Society should have accurate intelligence; and there may be from time to time not a few, with which it will be less proper to acquaint the body in general at first, than some of the discreeter private members, or the Secretary, or me. It will be requisite to know, not only if any missionary is guilty of gross vices, or teaches false doctrines; which last I am sorry to say we learnt, in the case of Mr. Beach, from the Dissenters, not from any of our own church; but, who are remiss,

or impudent, or defective in abilities or attainments; who on the contrary are diligent, wise, judicious, learned; and likewise what missions demand superior degrees of knowledge, temper, and conduct. We should also know, as nearly as we can, what each congregation is able to contribute, and doth contribute, to the support of its missionary; and, which are able to support them entirely; that we may not lavish away what is intrusted with us; and, where it may be fit to establish new missions.

I suspect that we ought to have more upon the frontiers; at least when it shall please God to bless us with a peace. For missionaries there might counteract the artifices of the French papists, and do considerable services, religious and political at once, amongst the neighboring Indians; both which points the Society hath been heavily charged, on occasion of the present war, with having neglected. I fear that in some of our back settlements, there are very few opportunities of public worship and instruction; and we have been accused of slighting these, whilst we have crowded with missionaries, regions which had already a sufficient number of pastors; and are told, with threatening intimations, that this is a breach of our charter. We have answered, that our charter was granted for the encouragement of an orthodox, that is a Church of England, ministry; to which it is replied, that the evils specified in the charter against which this orthodox ministry was to be employed, are only those of infidelity and popery; and that we have no right to presume any other ends to have been in view than are expressed. Still indeed we can urge with justice, that both these evils will be best obviated or remedied on the principles of our church; for the establishment of which throughout our American dominions, there are strong motives of various kinds, to wish most earnestly. But too many who call themselves of our church, have no notion of any material distinction in this respect. And our Dissenters have alleged against the Society, with remarkable zeal, amongst all who are indifferent about us, and all who are adversaries to us, a formidable multitude when put together, that we have unwarrantably changed our object, from the propagation of Christianity and Protestantism, to the propagation of one form of it, in opposition to other Protestants; and make the gaining of proselytes from these our chief business, which was not designed to be any part of it, nor was attempted, they say, I want to learn how truly, by our predecessors in the

Society for many years after its erection. And this accusation hath prevailed so far over all which we say in our own defense, that not only future collections are like to be grievously hurt by it, as the last though a very good one upon the whole, was in some degree; but if it should be brought into Parliament, by some popular speaker, especially at one of those times of epidemic vehemence and wildness which are frequent in this country, it may produce very disagreeable consequences to the Society; nay possibly may overturn and dissolve it. Therefore we must be extremely cautious, how we appoint new missions, where Presbyterians or Independents have assemblies. Indeed I do not see how we can safely appoint any in such places, unless a competent number which must not be a very small one, of persons of character, shall declare to us under their hands, that they cannot in conscience comply with the mode of worship and church government in use there, and that they approve ours, but cannot raise a fund to support it amongst them. For then we shall be authorized to argue if we are questioned on the subject, that either we must assist them, or they must be destitute of religious offices; the thing, which our charter was designed to prevent.

The Dissenters in America are so closely connected with those in England, and both with such as, under color of being friends to liberty, are many of them enemies to all ecclesiastical establishments, and more than a few to the Gospel Revelation; that we have need to be continually on our guard against them. And for this reason, amidst several others, the Society or some of its members, ought to have constant advices from the clergy, in each of our colonies, of every thing likely to forward or obstruct our great work; which it hath by no means had of late. More especially we should have early accounts of all facts, concerning which we may have cause to complain of the Dissenters, or they may think they have cause to complain of us that we may be ready to say and do about them what is requisite. And in these accounts all circumstances of weight must be stated fully and impartially, without omissions, alleviations, or aggravations; and we must be informed of the pleas which the other side make for themselves; else we shall often be put to shame, when they come to represent their own case. But above all, when anything appears in print among you, reflecting on the Society here, or any part of the conduct of our clergy abroad, from what-

ever quarter it proceeds, it should be immediately sent over to us; and also the answers given to it by our American brethren. Indeed we ought to see everything which tends to show the real state of religion in our plantations; and I shall gladly bear the expense of your furnishing us with all books, pamphlets, and papers, conducive to this end. It will further be of importance, that we should understand how the principal laymen and dissenting ministers are severally affected towards our undertaking; and what their connections with men of note in this Kingdom are.

All these things will contribute, directly or indirectly, to facilitate what we must ever pray and labor for, till we obtain it, the establishment of bishops of our church in America. This I have long had at heart; and not only said but written a great deal in favor of it to such as I hoped might be brought off from their prejudices, either wholly or in some measure. Nor, unsuccessful as the attempts have been, shall I ever abandon the scheme as long as I live, but pushing it openly at present would certainly prove both fruitless and detrimental. They alone are judges of opportunities, who know the dispositions and influences of persons and parties; which cannot always be explained to others. The design when some years ago it seemed to be in great forwardness, received a most mortifying check, by means of an unseasonable step, which a worthy and able prelate took to promote it, and of which its opposers made their advantage. The time is not yet come for retrieving the ground then lost; though I believe the King to be well disposed, and those whom he consults, to be, in general, either not averse, or only so through groundless fears. But in the meanwhile, both you and we may be seeking occasions, in friendly and seemingly accidental discourse, and with better effect as we can truly affirm, that no plan for this purpose lies now, or will be laid soon before our superiors, to show men, that nothing was ever intended, at which Christians of any denomination have cause to be alarmed; but merely a provision that those of our communion in the colonies might have that complete and easy exercise of every branch of their religion which others there have, and would complain bitterly if they had not, and ought therefore from the love which they profess of universal harmless liberty, not only to consent that our people should have, but join to procure it for them. The powerful objection made at home against our proposal is that the Dissenters abroad

have terrible apprehensions of being injured by it. And in proportion as their remonstrances are vehement, our endeavors will be unpromising. Therefore the principal point is to convince them, that whatever the bishops were, from whom their ancestors fled into the New World, those of the present age are, and have always been, most sincere patrons of extensive toleration; and that we are for sending persons of our own order into America, not to claim the least jurisdiction over them, but merely to ordain ministers for Episcopal congregations, without the trouble, expense and hazard of a voyage to England, a burden, to which if they were subjected, they would think unsupportable; to confirm from time to time the youth of those congregations, a practice which rightly or wrongly we hold in high esteem; and to exercise such discipline in those congregations only, as they exercise by ordained presbyters or lay elders, which discipline of ours would no more hurt them, than theirs hurts us. To these representations they will pay more regard, if we are careful not to give them unnecessary offense in any thing, but in everything to oblige them, as far as there is room for it, without betraying the doctrines, the interests or the honor of our church.

I conceived it would be best to lay before you, thus plainly and distinctly, my judgment concerning the due method of conducting the affairs of the Society. If in any article we differ, I beg you will communicate to me your opinion and your arguments for it, with the utmost freedom; and be assured it will give me pleasure. Where we agree, you will have the goodness to lead others into the same way of thinking, and a suitable course of behavior. Thus let us each be doing the best we can, and leave the event to God. That his blessing may be on all who serve him in the Gospel of his Son, particularly on you and your college, our clergy in America and their people, is the fervent prayer of,

Your loving brother,

Tho. Cant.

Archbishop Secker to Dr. Johnson. Dec. 10, 1761.

Lambeth, December 10, 1761.

Good Dr. Johnson:—

I have been a very bad correspondent, and scarcely dare promise to amend, though I purpose it, God willing. Besides much ex-

traordinary business arising from the King's accession, marriage, and coronation, and two visitations of distant parts under my jurisdiction, I have had a severe fit of the stone, and am now under a second fit of the gout within these six months; and must not hope, in my 69th year, that these complaints will grow lighter, but expect to be overwhelmed by additional ones. However I have forced myself to take up my pen, to make my excuse to you as well as I can.

You judged rightly from my letter of January 20, that I had written a former, which had not come to your hands. It was written November 4, 1760. I should have sent a duplicate of it soon after. But all that I can do now is to send you a copy, and another proxy, that which accompanied it being, I presume lost with it.

I thank you for your draught of an address for bishops on a peace. Would to God both events were nearer than they seem to be at present. The right time to try is certainly when a peace is made, if circumstances afford any hope of success. But this is a matter of which you in America cannot judge; and therefore I beg you will attempt nothing without the advice of the Society, or of the bishops. The address of the clergy in and near Boston to the King upon his accession, which was sent to the late Bishop of London to be presented, never was presented, because he thought it mentioned bishops prematurely. When I presented that which came from New York, signed by you, I told the King that there had been one from New England transmitted to Bishop Sherlock (who was dead when I spoke to his Majesty), but that what he had done with it I knew not. I gave him that copy of the college address which was under the common seal.

I have received a very obliging letter from the clergy assembled at Philadelphia, May 29, 1761, on occasion of my letter to Mr. Maclenachan, with a request that I would give leave for its being printed. But as I am assured that his party is declining, I thought it unnecessary.

Many thanks to you for the tracts which you have written and sent me. I have read them with much pleasure, as I hope many have done.

Before I received your letter, informing me that Mr. Viets, a person, I think, unknown to me, desired he might come and be

ordained to assist Mr. Gibbs, the Society had ordered that a successor to Mr. Gibbs should be sent. But nothing hath been done in consequence of this order. And if Mr. Gibbs be in low circumstances, and the assistant will be content with part of the salary, that will be the better scheme.

Mr. Read, who seems to be a very prudent worthy man, hath been at Oxford, and made inquiry concerning Mr. Cooper, whom he seems desirous to have at New York College, and probably hath written to you concerning him. His character in the university is very good; and he hath applied himself diligently to Hebrew this year. He is very willing to come to you, but only as Vice-President. You will consider of this, and specify what you can afford to give, unless you have heard of any other person. I can hear of no other.

The new Bishop of London (Dr. Hayter) is a very able and active, and spirited man, and hath much influence with some who have influence with the King. I hope, therefore, that he will be very useful to the colonies.

Dr. Bearcroft is dead, and we have chosen Secretary, Dr. Daniel Burton, who was many years my Chaplain, and is Chancellor of the Diocese of Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church, a very pious and sensible, and diligent, and careful, and disinterested man, who, I am fully persuaded, will give entire satisfaction, both on this side the water and on yours.

We receive complaints that Rye hath been vacant, and without the administration of the Sacraments, for a long time. But I think we have had no request to send a new missionary; and young Mr. Wetmore tells us that the minister must be chosen by the Vestry. I have directed our new Secretary to see if he can find anything in our books or papers about this matter. Old Mr. Wetmore was there before 1727.

Mr. Craig, missionary at Chester, in Pennsylvania, saith that as he was appointed by the Society before the people petitioned for a new minister, they are very backward in complying with any reasonable terms. He is coming over for his health; by which means we shall hear more particulars, and settle whether he shall return to them or not.

I have not learnt yet what has become of Mr. Camp, since his return from the south. Mr. Lindsay, missionary at Trinity Bay,

Newfoundland, hath left his mission, and seems too much confused and disordered in his head to be fit for any other. I am told from the newspapers that good Dr. Cutler is dead. Mr. James Greaton was ordained last year for his curate, with a view of making him his successor if proper.

The convention, which met in Philadelphia in May, 1760, sent word that the church of Newcastle, in that country, was grown very thin, and that the other and more numerous (I suppose at White-Clay) had refused to receive Mr. Ross for their missionary. Pray can you tell me what the reason of this is? And what becomes of those who have rejected Mr. Ross?

Mr. Moir, in North Carolina, sends over large accounts of multitudes baptised by him. At the same time Governor Dobbs saith, he hears Mr. Moir doth but little, and doubts the truth of his numbers. Can you give me any information about this matter?

Mr. Martin, of St. Andrews in South Carolina, is come over hither, and hath very honorably told the Society that he thinks his salary of thirty pounds a year may be better employed by them. I wish we had more such instances, where circumstances will allow them. And I cannot help thinking that the laity of our church abroad are not so liberal to their ministers as they might be, and as those of other denominations are, but lean too hard upon the Society; in which, perhaps, their ministers sometimes encourage them, or connive at them, in order to live upon better terms with them. You will tell me whether I am right in this notion.

A strict examination hath been made here into the state of our Barbadoes affairs, which appear to have been very bad for many years past; and a new committee is appointed to watch over them more diligently for the future. At the head of this committee is Dr. Drummond, now Archbishop of York, a man of very extraordinary talents for business of all sorts; and I am persuaded that we shall reap great advantages from what will be done.

I pray God to bless you, good Dr. Johnson, and I beg you to pray for your loving brother,

Tho. Cant.

Rev. Mr. Beach to William Samuel Johnson. Dec. 21, 1762.

Reading, Dec. 21, 1762.

Dear Friend and Cousin:—

I think I saw your hand in a letter which your good father lately honored me with; if so the occasion of my request can be no secret to you. Pray Sir, as you have opportunity, as soon as possible get information from records, what are the highest salaries and settlements given to dissenting ministers, in any principal towns in this government, *e. g.*, New Haven, Stratford, etc. And what Mr. Winslow receives from the people; for I suppose he receives the most of any missionary in these parts. If you'll be so good as to give me assistance of any kind, it will be thankfully received by,

Sir, your humble servant,

J. Beach

William Samuel Johnson to J. Beach. Jan. 4, 1763.

Rev. Sir:—

I will not conceal from you that I have been solicitous that you should undertake an answer to the vile, ill-natured pamphlet which has been lately published against us. As it is an occasion of great triumph to the Dissenters (at least the most bitter and ill-natured of them, for many there are who I know disapprove of it) I could not think it ought to pass unnoticed. At the same time I must own that as none have already labored so long and so ably in the cause of the church, it is, I think, laying too great a burden upon you at this time of life. But (without a compliment) I know nobody else amongst us equal to it. Sorry I am to say it, there does not appear that genius and ability for the defense of the church in the younger clergy (though they are very worthy gentlemen) which the cause so justly deserves and which I fear we shall so greatly want. Illy I fear in this respect will they be able to copy the fair example which their predecessors who have laid the foundations of the church in this country have set them. I am not indeed proud of these kind of controversies but if such virulent things as these pamphlets or indeed anything insolently wrote against the church passes unaswered, illy the church, I fear it, will inasmuch sink under the weight of popular odium and the cause at length be looked upon as untenable. At the same time (tho' it were easy to recriminate, as there are objects enough for ridicule

among the Dissenters) I do not wish anybody to answer this fool according to his folly. So far forth as there is any argument in what he has said or suggested it may be answered with a cool reasoning, etc. But a principal object I apprehend should be to point out seriously and clearly the shocking bitterness, vileness and ill-nature of the author thus inhumanly to revile a national church which has been the bulwark of the reformation and has produced not a few of the most pious, the best and ablest defenders of Christianity, and in every respect most worthy men the world ever saw [. . .] and indiscriminately to represent the whole body of our clergy and people as destitute of all charity, Jacobites, enemies not only to the government in the plantations but to the protestant succession in the H[ouse] of H[anover], the friends and patrons of vice and immorality, the subverters of everything serious and sacred; etc., etc., not to mention his low cants at particular persons and characters—and to show the fatal tendency of writings of this kind to inflame party, create and maintain animosities, bitterness and ill-nature amongst mankind and render them devoid not only of all Christian but even of all human and social virtues. This writer accuses us of want of charity only for pointing out in the course of controversy some of the consequences of their wild doctrines which however were never charged as I remember upon the whole body of Dissenters. What then is his charity who paints us in this odious light, this accusation of us being factious and endeavoring to subvert the governments is also most unjust. Such treatment as this and what we have received on some other occasions is indeed enough to provoke us to it but he rather infers it from what might be expected as the consequence of their usage and from what they of his stamp have always done and probably would do in such a situation. For here [?] from facts it has been justly remarked that churchmen have here at least been to a fault negligent of politics and whenever they have at any time exerted themselves it has been always in favor of the gentleman, in place the most worthy, stable part of the government, and to prevent any revolution in favor of those who would have overturned everything both in their former confusions and later struggles. If they have sometimes voted for one of their own communion is it to be wondered at? Do not they? Do not every other sect and party the same with infinitely more zeal than we have ever done? Are we not members of the body, are

we not free of the corporation? Do we not equally with them bear our part of the public burdens? And in a popular free state as this, is it not equal, right and agreeable to the very spirit of the constitution that every considerate part of the body should be represented by their friends in the public assemblies and have weight in proportion to their numbers. Yet in fact the church people here have not (owing probably to their own negligence, they never have had it in their power by any of their communion being in place, to vary, check, or restrain the least measure or prevent any design which the government would pursue. Having never as I remember had more than 4 or 5 members to 1000 in the Lower and never one in the Upper House of Assembly. And how very few ever have been appointed to any places of trust in the government every body knows. How ridiculous then is it to talk of churchmen's aspiring to power. Let them compare us with other sects, the New Light, Separatists, Anabaptists, how much do they out do us in pursuing and acquiring public influence. The N. L. within my short memory were a small party, merely a religious one, honored within and restrained by laws and degrees of assembly, yet fresh in everybody's memory, then looked upon as far off from the established as the churchmen, and in this short period of their continual struggles they have acquired such an influence as to be nearly the ruling part of the government owing to their superior attention to civil affairs and close union among themselves in politics. While the church people have been quiet and easy and have given neither party any disturbance. If we can but have tolerable fair play and enjoy the common rights of Englishmen (which however we have not always had) in peace we seek not the subversion of their government nor any room in their administration. Why then do they write thus and insult us and endeavor to make us the laughing stock of fools, a bye-word and a song? Do any among them approve of such attacks upon Dissenters? Have they forgot the Tale of the Tub, Hudibrass, and many others (in which pieces however there is real wit and genuine satire, not such dirty low scandal as this piece contains). But do they forget or forgive them or are they pleased with such writings? If they do not approve of them much less will they of this unchristian, inhuman and ungentlemanlike attack upon us. I do not mention any of these things as imagining they will not occur to you, but as an

excuse for my having endeavored to have you engaged again in controversy.

I have obtained from the clerk a copy of Mr. W's settlement and salary which I enclose. The settlement I imagine was equal to about 200 lbs. Ao. Mr. Winslow's rates, good part of which however he never gets, have been in 1757—45:4:8½. 1758—34:1:7¼. 1759—35:15:3. 1760—40:14:1¾. 1761—49:9:11¼. Besides this we have given for a year or two a free-will contribution 20.

I am going to N. Haven next week and shall collect others as soon as I can. If I can serve you in anything else I shall very gladly do it, being upon all occasions,

Sir, your most obedient and
very humble servant,

[W. S. J.]

Jany. 4th, 1763.

East Apthorp to Samuel Johnson. Mar. 26, 1763.

Cambridge, 26 March, 1763.

Reverend Sir:—

It would be a great failure of respect, had I deferred my thanks for your last favors, on any other account than my having little to communicate worth your attention from this uninteresting scene of life, which has been rendered still more so, by a long inactive winter. The letter with which you last obliged me, was accompanied with the very acceptable present of your piece on prayer; which I think must reconcile the minds of those, who either from false philosophy object to the duty itself, or from blind and ignorant prejudices are averse to our liturgy. By an advertisement in the little pamphlet I now transmit you, you will see that I am meditating something on the same noble subject. Though other engagements may retard or prevent the publication; I will venture to give you the general design of what I have attempted. I have entertained an opinion, that the practice of religion in this country has been injured from some singular causes: among the Dissenters, by their vague indeterminate mode of worship, and by the stress laid on certain speculative doctrines; while our church has too much acquiesced in its public forms, and grown remiss in the spirit and improvement of them. Being myself persuaded, that nothing but a principle of religion can make men virtuous; and that to make the religious

principle of universal and constant influence it is necessary to introduce it into common life; on these views, I have thought of publishing three or four sermons on the whole Scripture doctrine and duty of prayer; and of subjoining a collection of devotions in three parts: liturgical — domestic — and private. And to complete this little system of family religion there will be added a few thoughts on the reading of the Scriptures. In the devotions I am little more than an editor, having selected and altered with great freedom, what suited my plan in such books of devotion as I best approved of. I shall esteem it an advantage to the collection, if you will grant me the permission of inserting in it, with your name, the prayer at the end of your book of ethics; with some slight changes to adapt it to my plan. Of this, and of the design itself, I shall be greatly obliged for your commands and opinion. It was my intention to have set about this publication immediately; but I am fearful of the reception it may meet with amidst such diversity of opinions, and the license of the press, that prevails among us; and which has of late displayed itself in a very disagreeable manner, on the death of Dr. Miller. I have myself been treated with much rudeness in the public newspapers; which in part occasioned the short pamphlet of *Considerations*. This I find has gained me a formidable adversary in Dr. Mayhew, who has undertook to convince the Society of their errors and misconduct. As the point in dispute is referred to them, I shall meddle no more with it, and hope the Doctor will not improve his advantages in the arts of controversy, over an unequal antagonist who disclaims the contest. Dissensions of this or of any kind have so ill an effect on the happiness of life, as well as on the Christian temper, that I am sometimes led to think we cannot carry too far the principles of toleration and religious freedom. Error may be won over but will hardly submit to be convinced. And as far as I can judge, the worthy part of the Dissenters will make advances to us with a better grace, the less they are solicited. I wish our neighbors who are so tenacious of their own liberty, would be as tender of infringing that of others. I think those happy who, like you, have arrived at that calm period of life when religion becomes a divine temper in the soul, not a subject of science or controversy. Your candid and encouraging disposition will lead you to the most favorable judgment of a young

man's sentiments and designs. I express them to you, with the most respectful deference to your judgment, and am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

East Apthorp

ARCHBISHOP SECKER TO DR. JOHNSON. MAR. 30, 1763.

Lambeth, March 30, 1763.

Good Dr. Johnson,

I thank you for the kind condolence which you express in your letter of January 6. I was then in a fresh fit of the gout, and have another upon me now. These attacks unfit me greatly for business, else I should have written to you sooner. As Mr. Beach hath undertaken to answer the late virulent pamphlet, I hope he will do it in such a manner as to win over the more moderate of the Dissenters from some of their prejudices against us, and shame even the more vehement, by a good example, into some degree of mildness and fairness. My meaning was not to intimate that I knew the name of the writer, but only to signify a doubt whether it might not be Dr. Mayhew, which I found some persons had suspected. I knew not whether Mr. Beach, who, in a letter some time ago, mentioned himself as declining, would be willing to undertake such a work, and therefore had intended to propose it to Mr. Apthorp, of whose abilities and temper the Bishop of Norwich gives me the highest character. But I am glad your information came time enough to prevent me, for one may suffice. [. . .]

Probably our ministry will be concerting schemes this summer, against the next session of Parliament, for the settlement of his Majesty's American dominions; and then we must try our utmost for bishops. Hitherto little hath been said to them, and less by them, on the subject. Our Dissenters, however, give out the contrary, and endeavor to raise an alarm. God prosper us if it be his will.

I have not heard that any application hath been made for a Doctor's degree for Mr. Chandler, but shall be ready at any time to forward one, as I understand from you that he deserves it so well.

Dr. Burton will write to you concerning the several missions. As the Society had, on your recommendation, appointed Mr. Palmer for Rye, and sent him notice of it, before Mr. Punderson was named

on the occasion; we cannot change the appointment without Mr. Palmer's consent. I shall be glad if he consents voluntarily; but we must not press him against his inclination. The people at Rye may refuse him if they will, and take the maintenance of Mr. Punderson upon themselves, and we shall be very well pleased.

We have heard nothing directly from Hartford yet. Whenever a fit opportunity offers, we shall be very desirous of doing whatever may be agreeable to you. And I assure you I will do nothing to retard your retirement, beyond expressing my wishes that you would be so kind to your college and to Mr. Cooper as to give him a competent time for becoming and showing himself in some degree proper to succeed you.

It grieves me to concur in postponing any of the new missions which you would have us establish. But indeed some of those which we have established already in New England and New York have so few members of our church in them, and there are so great numbers in other parts destitute of all instruction, whom we may hope to secure to our church, by sending missionaries to them before other teachers get amongst them, I mean the new and frontier settlements, that I think we cannot avoid preferring the latter. Would to God we could effectually assist both; but we must not bring ourselves under a necessity of making another collection for the Society soon. Indeed it must be put off some years the longer, on account of that which is now making for the two colleges; for they will be considered as akin one to the other.

I told you that I thought I had secured one hundred and seventy pounds for Mr. Charlton's damages on his glebe. And I have still reason to believe that the King did sign a warrant for that sum to be paid here to the Society's Treasurer. But remonstrances were made against it by some officer through whose hands the business was to pass. And now the Secretary at War hath written to Sir Jeffrey Amherst about it, whose answer is in these words: "The case of Mr. Charlton is this, that he really suffered by the encampment of the troops; and I was in hopes that the Assembly of the Province would have considered his losses. If that doth not take place, I shall pay him out of the contingencies in the manner you are pleased to direct." This, therefore, I hope will be done. I hope also, that Mr. Charlton will lay out what he receives upon his glebe faithfully and prudently. If you can contribute to his doing so I

hope you will; for I know not how to contrive that the money may be paid into the hands of any one that should act as trustee on the occasion.

I must not omit to tell you, that Mr. Cooper, in the only letter I have had from him, dated December 2, 1762, expresses in the strongest manner, his sense of the numberless civilities and acts of kindness which he saith he hath received from you. Continual good advice will be the greatest kindness that you can show him.

It would be inconvenient and disagreeable to Mr. Beach, and not desirable in itself, to have a formal controversy raised upon this wretched pamphlet. And in order to avoid it, his answer may be anonymous, as the pamphlet is; or, however, he may signify that he doth not intend to take notice of any reply, or enter further into a discussion of particulars; his principal view being to convince persons, and, if it may be, the writer himself, that since we are all to give an account of every idle word, and no denomination of Christians is faultless, and mutual charity is the great precept of our Savior, we should treat all religious matters with seriousness, and one another with mildness and candor. [. . .]

I am, with much regard,
Your loving brother,
Tho. Cant.

LETTER AND ENCLOSURE FROM HENRY BARCLAY TO SAMUEL JOHNSON.
AUG. 1, 1763.

At a meeting of the Commissioners of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians in New England and Parts adjacent in America, 22nd July, 1763,

Mr. Cornelius Bennet of Middleborough having offered himself to go as a catechist to the Mohawks, and been in treaty with the Rev'd Doctor Johnson and Doctor Barclay about going: and Mr. Bennet having been recommended to the Commissioners as a person suitable for the employment,

Voted that the Commissioners will allow twenty pounds lawful money for one year for his encouragement in the service and advance one quarter's salary to enable him to prepare for and prosecute his journey to the Mohawk Castle, provided the Rev'd Dr. Johnson and Dr. Barclay shall approve hereof.

And that the treasurer write to Doctor Johnson and acquaint him

that the commissioners have not officiously engaged in this affair; but as has been mentioned to them from his Excellency the Governor, and the Rev'd Mr. Apthorp, they readily fell in with the proposal to manifest their desire of uniting with them in propagating our common Christianity among the Indians.

And that whenever the doctor shall think fit that Mr. Bennet should proceed, the treasurer advance the quarter's salary as aforementioned.

A. Oliver, Treas.

Transcribed from a Copy Examined.

Dear Sir: —

The above came enclosed to me in a letter from Mr. Bennet. I beg you will give me your sentiments upon it. The Indian affairs are in so precarious a situation that I should be at a loss how to advise any person to go amongst them, till I have some more certain and favorable accounts. We received yours by last post, and must beg your patience till the next for an answer. Mr. Cooper is out of town, Mr. Cutting will soon write to you. With my compliments to the family and Mr. Winslow, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

Hen. Barclay

August 1, 1763.

To Archbishop Secker. Aug. 10, 1763.

Stratford, August 10, 1763.

May it please your Grace: —

I humbly thank you for your kind letter of March 30th. I am greatly concerned that you are still troubled with the gout; but thankful that you are not (as Dr. Burton informs me) wholly disabled from attention to business. I earnestly pray for your ease and relief.

Mr. Beach's book came to me in the weight of my trouble, otherwise (having his leave) I should have expunged and altered several things. I hope it may answer some good ends. He seems to have now fewer complaints than he has had these 20 years. The author of that ugly piece is not yet known, though he is doubtless in this country. Indeed all deny it and seem ashamed of it, but I believe

most of them had some hand in it. It could not be Mayhew for he is censured in it. But he has done a worse thing; my answer to which, if your Grace should think fit to order it to be published, or anything else relating to it, perhaps it might be well Dr. Barclay's defense against Smith should be published with it. I question whether any reply will be made to Mr. Beach. Mr. Apthorp (to whom I sent a copy of Mr. Beach's answer, to transmit to your Grace) is indeed a very worthy and accomplished young gentleman, and I hope will be a good writer in the cause of religion, but he does not seem yet enough used to writing, and is so averse to controversy, that it may be doubted whether he is very suitable to engage with such antagonists as these. He utterly declines any reply to Mayhew, but would be glad to have mine printed. I have just heard Mr. Brown of Portsmouth has published a reply, whom with Aplin, I see in a newspaper, he treats with the most haughty contempt. Most Dissenters, I believe, do by no means approve of him.

Your Grace will see by my letter to the Secretary, that the better sort of Dissenters at Boston, are so zealous to propagate the Gospel among the heathen, that they are ready to employ Mr. Bennet, or at least to contribute to his undertaking, though he entirely conforms to the church. So that I would hope that Society has no designs against the church, however there may be good political reasons against that act. I conclude schemes are now concerting for the settlement of America, and I strongly hope the interests of religion will not be forgotten. Now must be the time, if ever, to be in earnest for bishops, and I trust all that is possible will be done to gain that point. The Dissenters also, and our newspapers, are full of the talk; and indeed they know the thing is so reasonable, that we should and ought to be complete in our kind, as well as they in theirs, that they seem to expect nothing else; and I believe if it was once done, they would generally soon be easy enough. And I earnestly wish your Grace [. . .] pray God to bless your endeavors. They have one story here among them which may possibly have some truth in it. It is said Dr. Chandler was asked by somebody from the ministry whether, if a bishop were established at Quebec, without any jurisdiction that should relate to the Dissenters, they would have any objection to it and that he answered, none at all. And indeed I cannot conceive why they should. Now we should be

very glad of such an one rather than one who might visit us once in four or five years. And I suppose there is already provision made for one there, now come into our hands; and if he had some good missionaries with him from the government, he might do much good in converting both papists and Indians.

The money is paid to Mr. Charlton, but it will be faithfully laid out, as he has Mr. Chandler with him in that case. My friendship for the latter makes me desirous of your Grace's influence that he may have a Doctor's degree, if he has not had one. Your Grace will see what I write to the Secretary about missions. Mr. Palmer was glad to be at New Haven rather than Rye; and Rye being, for aught I can hear, very happy in Mr. Punderson, would now be extremely unwilling to receive him, but partly through the poverty of most, and partly through the indifferency of others towards religion, they can by no means do without the Society's assistance. I am sensible of your difficulty of making new missions, and for the reasons your Grace gives, which I have often used to repress the forwardness of people to expect. And this among other things has abated the forwardness of Hartford, who have of late gone on but heavily. They are however building and I hope will in time be a flourishing church. But at present there is no hope of good Mr. Winslow's being any where better provided for than he is here, unless he would go to Virginia or Maryland, which he cannot reconcile himself to the thoughts of.

As to myself, I am very happy here as I am, only as I have never for almost 50 years been without some public charge or other, it seems somewhat strange now to be without one. However I hope I may live here to some good purpose, by directing candidates and others to their studies, and preaching frequently for Mr. Winslow, and so enable him often to preach at destitute places. I hope also, though at this distance to be of some use to the college. I am much obliged to Mr. Cooper for the kind report he made of me to your Grace. So long as providence permitted us to be together (5 or 6 months) he was with me as a son with a father, and has since, in a vacation, spent a week with me here, besides many letters passing between us; on all which occasions, I have suggested everything I could think of that might be of use, which he has readily received with the best good will; and I have the great pleasure to inform your Grace from Dr. Barclay and Mr. Auchmuty, that his conduct

since I left them has been prudent, faithful and diligent, and very acceptable both to the governors, people and scholars; and they have now at last established a good grammar school, for want of which the college has much suffered; and the governors are more in earnest than they have ever been since Mr. Nicoll's death. So that I hope the college will not suffer by my leaving it, but rather flourish better than ever it has done, and that he will be a great blessing to it. I own, I much doubted, being so young, how his patience would hold out, in the service of gentlemen, most of whom care for little else but their gain and pleasures, and are utter strangers to learning and colleges; but I hope he will never meet with such severe trials of patience as I have had.

Since I have been here, I have found every thing the reverse of what that wicked pamphlet describes, both in ministers and people. At the request of the clergy, I attended and preached to them, and a large concourse of people, at their convention in June. Everything was truly amiable and pleasing, and I must report them a worthy set of faithful and conscientious clergymen (and several worthy lay-gentlemen from various distant parts were among us) tho' much learning cannot be expected in their low and laborious circumstances. I discoursed with them freely on many points, and among others on the very subject your Grace mentions in the close of your letter, the necessity of using exactness and much care and caution in writing their letters, which I shall further inculcate. On this occasion, my Lord, give me leave to observe to you, that neither have the abstracts, heretofore, been always made with sufficient care and caution; things of no use have been inserted, and even figures have sometimes been mistaken or misprinted. But I will not enlarge, only, that humbly begging your Grace's prayers and blessing, I remain, with the greatest regard,

My Lord,
Your Grace's most obliged
most dutiful and
most obedient humble servant,
Samuel Johnson

EAST APTHORP TO SAMUEL JOHNSON. SEPT. 22, 1763.

Reverend Sir:—

I greatly thank you, as for all your letters, so especially for any

hints you give me that are of use to direct my studies. In this light I consider what you wrote in your last letter, in regard to Episcopacy. I have the books you mention, with other good writers on the same subject, which I have little farther considered, than as it is incidentally mentioned in the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists; in whom I find many plain testimonies for the three orders. I think they and the New Testament do not carry Episcopacy higher than to the exclusive privilege of ordination and church censures; and it seems, we must at last recur to tradition, for its divine institution; and defend it, as authorized by most ancient precedents and as expedient to preserve the unity of the church. But I propose to make a distinct enquiry into this subject, and shall always endeavor to keep my mind impartial and open to truth on every subject. It is indeed the greatest concern to me of any in my profession, to find religion the subject of so much controversy. I am so well persuaded of its general truths, that I am very averse to engaging in disputed circumstantials. Even my opinion of the conduct of our Society is not without some hesitation; though I think they have done more real service to religion than by any other application of their fund. I perceive they are severely reproached in relation to the Indians, by a very popular writer in England, of our own church: I mean Dr. Brown, in a late address to the American colonies. I wish Mr. Caner's piece may fully vindicate them. In consequence of the neutrality I have professed on this point, I have not seen his remarks: he tells me they are printing off at two presses with yours.

My sermon has been some time printed, but waits for an appendix from the same hand that engaged me in this little publication. Till that is finished, the sermon will not be published. I send you a copy of it, the only one which is yet in anybody's hands. As there is still an opportunity of retracting any material errors; I should be glad to have your friendly censure of it.

I have heard nothing yet of Mr. Bennet. I wish so well to his design, that I shall do all in my power to assist it. With very grateful acknowledgments for the favor of your correspondence I am, with much respect,

Rev'd Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

East Apthorp

Cambridge
22 September, 1763.

ARCHBISHOP SECKER TO SAMUEL JOHNSON. SEPT. 28, 1763.

Good Dr. Johnson: —

I heartily thank you for your letter of August 10, particularly for the concern which you express about my health. It is frequently disordered; but I can for the most part pay some attention to business. When I fail, as I am now within a few days of seventy, an abler person in all respects, I hope, will succeed me.

Mr. Beach's book is not come to my hands; I wish it had received your corrections. I am as desirous that your answer to Dr. Mayhew should be published, as I can be without having seen it; because I dare say it is written with the temper which I told you I wished Mr. Beach might preserve. But indeed I fear the world will think we have settled too many missions in New England and New York; and therefore it may be best, not absolutely to justify, but to excuse ourselves in that respect, as prevailed on by entreaties hard to be resisted, as having many applications, and resolved to be hereafter more sparing in the admission of them, instead of making it our business to *Episcopize* New England, as Dr. Mayhew expresses himself. Our adversaries may be asked whether they have not made as great mistakes in some points, as we in this; and whether bitter invectives against them would not be unchristian. There was a company incorporated by Car. 2, in 1661, for propagating the Gospel amongst the heathen nations of New England and the adjacent parts, which still subsists, and the affairs of it are managed by the Dissenters. Queen Anne, in 1709, incorporated The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and empowered them to propagate it not only there, but in popish and infidel parts of the world. Accordingly they had correspondents and missionaries in New England above thirty years ago; and in Long Island, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia above twenty years ago; and probably they have still. It may be useful to inquire, whether these two societies have observed their charters better than ours hath. If not, their friends should think and speak mildly of us. The new projected Society at Boston is about sinking itself into the latter of these, as I am informed. I know nothing of Dr. Barclay's "Defense against Smith," nor of Aplin; possibly this last word was a slip of your pen for Apthorp.

What will be done about bishops, I cannot guess. Application for

them was made to Lord Egremont, who promised to consult with the other ministers, but died without making any report from them. His successor, Lord Halifax, is a friend to the scheme; but I doubt, whether in the present weak state of the ministry, he will dare to meddle with what will certainly raise opposition. I believe very little is done or doing yet toward the settlement of America; and I know not what disposition will be made of the lands belonging to the popish clergy in the conquered provinces.

I am very glad to hear the money is paid to Mr. Charlton. I have heard nothing of any design of a degree for Mr. Chandler, but from you. If any person here is engaged in it, I should know that we may act in concert. But I think we should have a more formal recommendation of him from you and Dr. Barclay, and any other principal persons, clergy or laity.

Your account of Mr. Cooper gives me great pleasure. In a late letter to me, he expresses good hopes about the college; but complains of some disappointment in regard to his income, which I do not distinctly understand. I have written to him, to recommend patience; and to Dr. Barclay, to desire that the governors will be as kind to him as with propriety they can. Mr. Caner hath sent over one Mr. Frink for a new mission at Rutland, about sixty miles from Boston, without any previous mention of the matter to the Society, which is irregular; and I do not think we shall appoint him to it; perhaps to some vacant old one we may, if such there be. The mission of Braintree is offered to Mr. Winslow, in order to make room for you at Stratford. Whether it be worth his acceptance I know not. But the Society are very desirous of restoring you to your old station; and if this proposal doth not succeed, they will be glad to have any other method pointed out to them.

Since I wrote thus far, the Society hath appointed Mr. Frink missionary at Augusta. It seems he was inoculated a few days before. I hope he will get safe through the distemper.

God bless you, good Dr. Johnson, and his church in your parts.

I am, with much esteem,

Your loving brother,

Lambeth, September 28, 1763. Tho. Cant.

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO ARCHBISHOP SECKER. DEC. 20, 1763.

Stratford, December 20, 1763.

May it please your Grace:

I humbly ask your Grace's pardon for troubling you so soon again, which I hope you will excuse, as I should be extremely wanting in my duty to your Grace, if I did not acknowledge your very kind letter of September 28. I am very glad and thank God that your health is not so much impaired as to forbid your giving some attention to business, and I earnestly pray that it may be yet again confirmed and lengthened out to the utmost, and the rather, as I am extremely afraid no gentleman can or may be found that will go near to make good your Grace's ground in these times.

I am surprised Mr. Beach's book is not come to your hand. I sent a copy which was promised me to be sent you from Boston, six months ago, and I have again urged it, and Aplin's (a lawyer) for so is his name. Mr. Apthorp declined answering. Mr. Caner (as it is privately said) has made, I think a pretty good answer to Mayhew, with which mine, such as it is, is printed. But I hear Mayhew has already replied, still in his own way. I trust it will soon come to you, and that you will not dislike it. He has remarked on their societies much as your Grace mentions. I know of but two or three little clans of a kind of Christian Indians. They have not many more I believe than Dr. Barclay had. One Mr. Wheelock is training up some lads, perhaps to good purpose, and I wish the Society would prosecute the design they once mentioned of training up some Indian lads at King's College. But I apprehend nothing of much consequence can be done without making a government affair of it with a wise bishop and a worthy clergy, men of spirit, who understand French, placed at Canada and other places; a thing which the sorrowful present depredations loudly call for, that if possible they may be civilized and converted.

Did our benefactors know the real state of things in New England, they would allow that missionaries are as much needed here as in other parts of America; the wildest notions are propagated here, both on the side of enthusiasm and infidelity. The letters of one Sandeman, on Theron and Aspatia, are much in vogue with many and tend to much mischief on the one hand, and such creatures as Mayhew, no less on the other; but I wish more could be done in the other provinces as well as here. Dr. Barclay's Defense was sent to

the Society, and I have advised him to send your Grace a copy, and also to write in behalf of Mr. Chandler, whose character truly is that of a very faithful missionary, and one that hath made much proficiency in learning, especially in divinity. I know of none so much to my mind, that loves books and reads so much as he. It would be much for the honor of the Church and the interest of true religion, if there were at least one Doctor in each province, and he should be a commissary. I wish Mr. Caner had a Doctor's degree who well deserves it, and the rather as the Dissenters have three in that province, and the Church none but Dr. Cutler and he has done. By a letter lately to me from Mr. Cooper it appears that the governors of the college have enlarged his salary to his content.

It is truly a miserable thing, my Lord, that we no sooner leave fighting our neighbors the French, but we must fall to quarrelling among ourselves. I fear the present state of the ministry is indeed very feeble, so that I doubt we must, after all our hopes, lose the present juncture also, for gaining the point we have long had so much at heart, and I believe must never expect another. Is there then nothing more that can be done, either for obtaining bishops, or demolishing these pernicious charter governments, and reducing them all to one form, in immediate dependence on the King? I can't help calling them pernicious, for they are indeed so, as well to the best good of the people themselves, as to the interest of true religion, as your Grace remembers I formerly intimated in some queries and letters.

I would hope Providence may somehow bring it about that things may be compromised respecting the ministry, and would it not now be a proper juncture for some such general address from the clergy of these provinces to the King as I once mentioned to your Grace? Or is there not probability enough of success yet with regard both to bishops and governors, to make it worth while for a gentleman or two (who I believe might be procured), to go from hence to solicit the gaining these points? For I doubt nothing will do without solicitation from hence. I should be greatly obliged to your Grace for your judgment and direction with regard to these things as soon as may be. It is indeed too much to trouble your Grace with these affairs, in your present infirm state. I therefore humbly beg your pardon that I am thus importunate. I remember you once

mentioned his Grace of York, as having an extraordinary talent for business; could not he be engaged to be active in these affairs?

I am much obliged to the Society that they are very desirous to restore me to this mission. Mr. Winslow is gone to Braintree to see whether it will do for him to accept it. If he does, I shall do my best, but it can not be long before I shall need some assistance. I am, with the greatest veneration,

My Lord,
Your Grace's most obliged
most dutiful and obedient
humble servant
Samuel Johnson

Since writing, a sensible good gentleman has been with me who has been in all parts of Canada and a prisoner among the remotest Indians. He speaks highly of Mr. Ogilvie at Montreal and is persuaded with me that (politically speaking) nothing could be of so much consequence to the purpose of civilizing and gaining the friendship of the Indians as well as converting the French as for such a bishop and clergy as above mentioned to be sent thither by the King, as they have been used to a bishop of their own. It would be well Hartford (who desire it and is but twelve miles off) should be joined with Middletown under the care of Mr. Jarvice, lately gone for orders.

To the Reverend Mr. Dibble, at Stamford. Feb. 9, 1764.

Stratford, Feb. 9, 1764.

Dear Sir:—

I rejoice and thank you that you have so well acquitted yourself in answering our two late opponents. I know not what Mr. Watts should have published his sermon for, when Dr. Chauncey had so lately done the same thing so much better. Tho' to do it justice it is, like that, a pretty well twisted rope of sand, which when you appeal to the stubborn facts of Scripture and antiquity, at once crumbles into dust. They might now just as rightly argue and conclude that Pompey and Augustus were of the same order and office because they were both called *Imperatores*. When all the world knows the fact was that within 50 years (as the case often is in other words) a different set of ideas was annexed to that word,

from what it meant 40 years before. Which was evidently the case of the word bishop, when the church came to be settled by the apostles about the close of their ministry as you prove to be attested by the ancients, Eusebius and Theodorit, from the constant tradition of the church, so that their specious argument from the identity of the names bishop and presbyter is a mere logomachy or strife about words and fixing their modern ideas to old words, and indeed whether there be two only or three orders may likewise be called a logomachy. We only contend that besides the deacons there was a presbytery in every city and its adjacent country, so constituted everywhere by the apostles as to have a fixed chief presbyter at the head of it (to whom the name bishop became soon appropriated), I say so constituted that no public act could lawfully be done by the presbytery without their head. So if you please, there were only two orders in the Jewish Church, priests and levites, but we know that there was at the head of the priests a chief priest *jure divino* and St. Clement and Jerome assert the Christian to be grounded on the Jewish. But however they are called, it was an evident fact that, as you plainly show, there were a number of presbyters called also bishops in the one Church of Ephesus in Acts 20, without governing powers, St. Paul still here as at Corinth. It was also no less evident fact that Timothy was ten years after this, fixed with settled ordaining and governing powers, as is plain from the two Epistles wrote to him one after another (and the like of Titus). So that it is an evident fact that he was the ordaining governor of the church for several years, and that such a fixed governor succeeded in that church is an evident fact in that about 30 years after there was still one fixed governor there called the angel of that church, who exercised jurisdiction there, trying those who pretended to be apostles and were not. These I say are evident Scripture facts, as are also the facts of Jerusalem, Philippi and Crete. And now to these succeed the universal facts of the primitive church, exactly correspondent to them, and put it out of all reasonable (I had almost said possible) doubt, that these Scripture facts are rightly stated and understood. Ignatius lived in St. John's time, and he attests to the fact of this form of government no less than 16 times as any one may see in his Epistles. Against the genuineness of these Epistles there is nothing alleged but mere con-

jecture and surmise, when Bp. Pearson has vindicated them to the entire satisfaction of the whole learned world and was never answered. Within a 100 years lived Tertullian and within a 150 lived St. Cyprian (to say nothing of others) whose works are full of the very same form of government with ours, and they must have as well known the form in which the apostles under divine inspiration established and left the church, as we can know how ours was in Queen Elizabeth's time. This was always my way of arguing; and just in the same way do our neighbors rightly argue the cause of infant baptism and the first day Sabbath; only they have not near so many clear incontestible facts either of Scripture or antiquity as we have for Episcopacy; so that they must give up them, or embrace that or be inconsistent with themselves. Stillingfleet was but twenty-six or seven when he wrote the *Irenicum* and retracted it in his riper years, as did also Sr. Peter King his *Inquiry*, and declared he was fully satisfied with Slater's answer. Dr. Edwards was much of a Dissenter in principle, though a churchman in practice. What the sense of our reformers was on which quibble is not to be learned from the transient expressions of individuals, and before they had duly considered things, but from the public authentic form of ordination, the preface to which expresses it in the justest and most accurate manner, and as right as I could wish. To her doctrines, government, and liturgy let us then adhere which certainly are and have often been shown to be the most Scriptural, pure and primitive of any now in the world. The Lutheran form of government is much the same with ours, only not a regular succession, except where bishops reformed as in Sweden and Denmark. I write with so much difficulty you must forgive me, I can add no more. I imagine the story of Dr. Tucker is really part of a plan for America agreed upon by the ministry to be laid before this Parliament, and I hope it may pass. As I have known his character these twenty years to be that of a most amiable, learned and enterprising gentleman, I do believe him to be the fittest man in England for the purpose. Mr. Winslow has concluded to go: I must soon get an assistant.

I am, dear Sir, your friend and brother,

S. Johnson

East Apthorp to Samuel Johnson. May 7, 1764.

Cambridge, 7 May, 1764.

Reverend and Good Sir: —

I have before me two of your favors, for which I make my earliest acknowledgments. The great affliction of our family in the death of Mrs. Wheelwright, who was extremely dear to us all, has hardly given me leisure or spirits, for some time past, to attend to any but the most necessary business.

I had a long conversation with Mr. Bennet on his affair. His public spirit leads him to project things that I fear cannot be effected, for want of the same spirit among those who alone can execute them. I have however undertaken to do all in my power; which is, to solicit our governor and lieutenant-governor to patronize him, and to receive four Indian youths at Boston, and in England. I shall use the influence of my friends with the Society to fix Mr. Bennet on their list, and to obtain, if possible, the appointment of two missionaries for the Mohawks. I hope something was done for him at a meeting of the Episcopal Society in Boston, to whom I recommended the support of his good undertaking. He proposes to make me another visit in a fortnight, when everything that can be done at Boston will be attempted.

The affair of soliciting the settlement of bishops among us, is, I perceive, a matter of too great consequence and difficulty for me to engage in singly. What I wrote so hastily was rather expressive of my good will than of my settled thoughts. I soon after received a permission from the Society, and an invitation from my friends to make a voyage to England, which I hope to acccomplish, by God's blessing, this year. I shall gladly exert myself in promoting that great national measure you speak of, as far as shall be proper for me. And as the subject is of much importance, I will write my thoughts to you with freedom and simplicity. It is an affair that would be solicited by a layman with less aversion and opposition than by a clergyman. And I believe there can hardly be a properer person employed than Mr. Johnson, whom I heartily wish well recovered of the small-pox. If he should engage in that service, I think his instructions from hence ought to be of weight and authority. If he was himself, in person, to collect the sense of the principal governments, not only of the clergy, but of the governors and persons of property and character among the laity, it might have a

good effect. But I think the letters you mention, signed by a few of the clergy in each province, would be ineffectual. If the whole application both here and in England was conducted with firmness, spirit and dignity, I am apt to think it would succeed, as the archbishop, and (it is said) the King himself approves of it. My opinion is confirmed by an answer to Dr. Mayhew published in London last winter, and wrote with admirable strength and temper. But this I suppose you have seen.

I know nothing of the article of news relating to Dr. Tucker of Bristol; nor do I think it is at all to be depended on.

What I write on this subject is with the most entire confidence in your wisdom to suppress any thoughts which you may not approve, and to accept my good intention. In this view I transcribe the quotation I mentioned, on the opposite page, and beg leave to declare myself,

Very respectfully, Reverend Sir,
Your most humble servant,
East Apthorp

QUOTATION APPENDED TO LETTER OF EAST APTHORP TO SAMUEL JOHNSON. MAY 7, 1764.

From the View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy, by Dr. Warburton, now Ld. Bishop of Gloucester. Letter IV, p. 143.

"The authority by which a thing is commanded makes no alteration in the essence of the thing; natural and positive duties retain their respective essences in the code of religion. Natural duties are eternal, positive duties, revocable. Of these latter some are lasting as the dispensation to which they belong; others temporary. Of the temporary some cease not till expressly revoked; others cease with the occasion that enjoined them. . . p. 144. Again, in the divine laws, some things are injoined to be believed as truths, others to be practiced as utilities. Of utilities, some are general, others particular: the first of these are permanent and constant; the second, variable. Of the first, is the church's composing a society; of the second, is the particular form. Thus, Jesus seemed to institute an equal ministry; the apostles, episcopal government; and modern churches both one and the other, as best suited to the various civil governments, with which they had allied. Christianity was by divine institution, a society at large; to authorize and to enable the several

churches to give particular forms to ecclesiastical government. When God himself allied the Jewish church with the state, he left not that religion a society at large, but prescribed in the minutest manner the form of church government.

"Pp. 146-7. From all this it appears that the unalterable part of the law of Christ is the doctrine; and the only alterable part the discipline. P. 163. Church government is here Episcopacy, there Presbytery, and in another place Independency. P. 164. The specific form of church government amongst Christians was not prescribed, and therefore none seems intended to be invariably followed, because Jesus did not unite his religion to the state, but left it to particular churches to follow such as was most agreeable to the forms of those civil societies in which they were to be established. P. 165. Christ only constituted his church a policied society in general and left the mode of it to human discretion"

You will perceive the above to be only extracts from a long discussion of this point, but they express the opinion of the writer clearly enough. But though I have a great deference for his judgment, I do not think it invalidates Chillingworth's argument from fact, or the testimonies of the Apostolic Fathers. It is besides observable that in profane writers before Christianity the word ἐπίσκοπος and διοικυσις are always expressive of authority and jurisdiction. *vid. Cic. ad Attic. lib. VII. Ep. 11. — ad Fam. lib. XIII. Ep. 67.*

ARCHBISHOP SECKER TO SAMUEL JOHNSON. JULY 31, 1766.

Lambeth, July 31, 1766.

Good Dr. Johnson: —

I am much ashamed, that I have delayed so long to answer your letters, and still more grieved that I cannot do it now to my own satisfaction or yours. It is very probable, that a bishop or bishops would have been quietly received in America before the Stamp Act was passed here. But it is certain, that we could get no permission here to send one. Earnest and continued endeavors have been used with our successive ministers, but without obtaining more than promises to consider and confer about the matter; which promises have never been fulfilled. The king hath expressed himself repeatedly in favor of the scheme and hath proposed, that if objections are imagined to lie against other places, a Protestant bishop should

be sent to Quebec, where there is a popish one, and where there are few Dissenters to take offense. And in the latter end of Mr. Grenville's ministry, a plan of an ecclesiastical establishment for Canada was formed, on which a bishop might easily have been grafted, and was laid before a committee of council. But opinions differed there; and proper persons could not be persuaded to attend; and in a while the ministry changed. Incessant opposition was made to the new ministry; some slight hopes were given, but no one step taken. Yesterday the ministry was changed again, as you may see by the papers; but whether any change will happen in our concern, and whether for the better or the worse, I cannot so much as guess. Of late indeed it hath not been prudent to do anything unless at Quebec. And therefore the address from the clergy of Connecticut, which arrived here in December last, and that from the clergy of New York and New Jersey, which arrived in January, have not been presented to the King. But he hath been acquainted with the purport of them, and directed them to be postponed to a fitter time. In the meanwhile, I wish the Bishop of London would take out a patent like Bishop Gibson's, only somewhat improved. For then he might appoint commissaries; and we might set up corresponding societies, as we have for some time intended, with those commissaries at their head. He appears unwilling, but I hope may be at length persuaded to it.

Requests have been made to me and other bishops, first for countenance, then for contributions to Mr. Wheelock's Indian school. My answer was that we heartily wished success to it; and intended to set up one not in opposition but in imitation of it; that we hoped the Dissenters would sufficiently support Mr. Wheelock's undertaking; but could not hope that they would contribute anything to a similar one of ours; and therefore it seemed requisite that churchmen should do their best for ours; though if any would be kind to theirs also, we should not blame them. They seemed pretty well satisfied. My first notion was that we might maintain Indian boys at Mr. Wheelock's school, who should afterwards take Episcopal orders. But Mr. Apthorp was clearly of opinion, that they would all disappoint our expectations in that respect. Now if only most, or many of them would, it will be absolutely necessary, that we should set up an Episcopal Indian school; else we shall both neglect our duty and lose our reputation. But we shall need

the best advice of our friends, in what place, or places, and under what masters and regulations, it will be most proper to attempt this. And the sooner we have such advice the better; for the distance between the Society and the scene of their business is extremely inconvenient. Mr. Barton of Lancaster hath conversed on this subject with Sir William Johnson, who hath desired to be proposed for a member of our Society, and earnestly recommends the Indians to our care at present. We have sent to ask further information from both these gentlemen; and shall be glad of it from all who are capable of giving it.

I have mentioned our late and former losses of missionaries to the King, as one argument for bishops. He is thoroughly sensible that the Episcopalians are his best friends in America. There seems no likelihood that the Scotch Presbyterians will obtain any further privileges from our parliament for their American brethren. Nor do I think there is any considerable increase of vehemence against Episcopacy here. Declaimers in newspapers are not much to be minded; nor a few hot-headed men of higher rank. I entreat you to write often and fully to me concerning all the church affairs of America. I have not indeed been tolerably regular in my returns to your letters. Gout and business, and principally the delusive hope that a little time would produce good news, have hindered me. I will endeavor to do better, if God spares my life. But at least your informations and advice will be always highly acceptable and useful to

Your loving brother,

Tho. Cant.

To Dr. Burton, Secretary of the Society. Sept. 27, 1767.

Sept. 27, '67.

Rev'd Sir:—

The bearer hereof is Mr. E. Townsend, whom I mentioned in my last, and we have now recommended as a worthy candidate for Salem in West Chester county, and whose case is truly represented in their address, and is of much importance, to which I beg leave to refer the Venerable Board, but if they cannot provide for him there he is willing to be otherwise employed. But as to the great importance of Salem and Barington and places adjacent in New York province I can say no more than I said in my two last. As to Bar-

ington, till it can be provided for, Mr. Palmer will go thither, as often as he can, but then he must in a great measure neglect Sharon. As to this place, which is indeed of much importance, you refer the dispute between him and Mr. Clark, or rather their people to be determined by me. I am of opinion if Barington could be provided for, the situation of it is such that it would be best for it to be equally divided between all the three, but if not, I see not but it must be annexed to New Milford. But I believe it would be best for the Society to order this rather than that it should rest upon my decision. The affair of Mr. Hubbard leaving Guilford was so tender and difficult that he was obliged to hold it in some suspense till he could have the advice of the convention we had lately at New Haven, when we advised him to remove thither. But we advised New Haven people to be content that he should visit Guilford two or three times in a quarter, which they seemed to acquiesce in, but I am humbly of opinion that it would be well for the Society to order this, and to order me to take care of Milford. I am, etc.

S. J.

To Dr. Burton, Secretary of the Society. May 12, 1768.

May 12, '68.

Rev'd Sir:—

The bearer hereof is Mr. John Tyler, who after having gone through a course of education at New Haven and been graduated both there and at New York, has diligently followed his studies, in Hebrew and divinity chiefly, above a year here at Stratford and often read prayers in my absence to good acceptance and behaved very exemplarily, now humbly offers the service of his whole life to the venerable Society, where they shall think fit to employ him. His first desire is to be placed at Guilford in place of Mr. Hubbard if it were consistent with the resolution of the Venerable Board which the people there beg leave humbly to hope it may, as the late Mr. Talbot had (to my knowledge) intended to bestow on them 400 pounds which upon Mr. Leeming's (one of the executors) intercession, they would hope may be allowed them by the Society, which with a small addition from the Society might qualify them to be a mission, and this is what I would humbly wish, if it might be, as it is my own native town. But if not, Mr. Hubbard, who is well pleased with New Haven, where he has enough to do, will

however willingly comply with the Society's instruction. But if Mr. Tyler cannot be at Guilford he desires to be at Norwich in Mr. Beardsley's place, whose petition and deed of a glebe house I herewith send you, and humbly submit the whole to the venerable board. I humbly thank you for your very kind letter by Mr. Townsend, and am greatly obliged to the Society for granting his request, and settling him at Salem, etc., where the people would have been in a heathenish condition without him, and now will be very happy. And I am no less thankful for the manner of commencing his salary, and others after him, which will be greatly needful in Mr. Tyler's case. As to Sharon, before your letter came, Mr. Palmer and Mr. Clark had come to an agreement by advice of a late convention at Middletown, which I was not able to attend. And I trust it will not be disagreeable to the Society that Mr. Palmer has agreed to bear some part with Mr. Clark in the care of that place, who is very acceptable in those parts. As for Mr. Lyon it seems it was not all the clergy that recommended him, and I hope those that did will find out some place where he may yet be useful if he is at all capable of being so, which I doubt. It is of great importance that that mission be continued at Long Island but that the seat of it be at Huntington, including Brookhaven and Islip. And I have been desired to intercede that as Mr. Greaton (late Dr. Cutler's assistant) who is desirous to move into the country, be placed there. I am very glad my son has had the honor of your acquaintance, and thank you for the regard you have shown him and the kind manner in which you mention him.

I am, Rev'd Sir, etc.

S. J.

Part VI

SELECTED SERMONS

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My First Sermon, Preached at Guilford, May 22, 1715, Anno Domini.

The Word of the Lord from the Prophesy of the Prophet Isaiah, the seventh chapter and fourteenth verse, the last word thereof, *Immanuel.*

The prophet Isaiah was one of those excellent prophets which God raised up to his people Israel, in their declining times, wherein there was very little more than the form of godliness to be found among God's covenant people. It was a time of very great degeneracy. For they had passed under the reigns of some very notoriously idolatrous and impious kings, which had caused the people to err, and backslide, and revolt away from the God of their fathers, whereby the kingdom was reduced to a very low ebb. Hence we read those sore and sharp reproofs which God sent to them by his message in the first chapter. But notwithstanding all this dreadful apostacy, which this covenant people of God were guilty of, yet God was pleased to call them his people still, and to take unspeakable pains with them to reduce them to a consideration of their ways, and turning from the evil thereof, and their doings which had not been good, to the God who indeed had done great things for them, yet whom they had ungratefully treated. And for the promotion thereof he raised up very many eminent prophets to warn them, to counsel and instruct them, that they might not be ignorant of the mysteries of the Kingdom. Though indeed notwithstanding all, they did persist in the wickedness of their ways, till they merely forced down judgments upon their heads to their utter ruin and deplorable overthrow. And among all the prophets sent unto this people, this professing people of God, this sacred prophet Isaiah was none of the least, but rather one of the greatest, for he was one of the first three mighty, and we find none to have a more clear and illustrious idea, and illuminated conception of gospel days than he had in his most bright and enlightened mind, being most intimately and familiarly acquainted with the mind and will of God. He was

a man transcendentally well-qualified for a prophet, a man of extraordinary zeal and affection for God's cause, and an exceedingly wise and understanding man, and an excellent orator. So that he was every way well furnished with qualifications to bear God's name unto his people, and sought by all possible arguments to induce the professing people of God to the ways of the God of their fathers. And among many arguments he makes use of some encouragements drawn forth in the prophesies concerning the glorious Messiah and gospel days concerning the glorious Kingdom of Christ, the happiness, peace and glorious excellency thereof, and among all the glorious gospel prophesy mentioned by this prophet, in this prophesy we have none more clear and illustrious than this we are entertained with in this chapter, as it was by the prophet directed to King Ahaz.

In the former part of which, the prophet strengtheneth King Ahaz against the fear of the invasion which Pekah, son of Remaliah, King of Israel, and Rezin, King of Syria, were making against Jersusalem and the cities of Judah. Wherein he declares that Ephraim, that is Israel (called Ephraim because Ephraim was the head tribe), within three score five years should be broken up, and not be a people. v. 8.

And to urge him to believe this prophesy, he argues with him telling him that if he would not believe, *i. e.*, that prophesy, he should not be established, that is strengthened against these his enemies.

In this second part of the chapter we have the prophet for the confirmation of King Ahaz's belief of the forementioned prophesy, desiring King Ahaz to ask a sign. v. 10, 11. And the King answers, v. 12, I will not ask a sign, wherein he gives that reason (doubtless not because his conscience gainsaith it, but rather from the moroseness of his spirit), because he would not tempt the Lord. Upon which the prophet returns a sore reproof upon him for his disobedience to the command of God in the 13th v. Is it a small thing to you, etc. Whereupon notwithstanding the King pretended to be so conscience bound that he would not ask a sign of the Lord, for fear of tempting him, yet he will give him a sign no less gracious and certain than it was wonderful, in the verse of our text. Being a short compendium of the whole gospel, a declaration of that great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3, 16, the

glorious ישוע the כשית and with him consequently all the benefits of the everlasting covenant which are other where by this prophet more clearly explained and discovered, intimating their spiritual salvation from their spiritual enemies, as a sign of their now temporal deliverance. This verse therefore contains the account what that great sign which God gives by his prophet Isaiah was, namely the glorious ישוע, Ιεσως Jesus Salus Salvator, a Savior. The כשית Messiah χριστος Christ *Unicus*, the annointed of God sent into the world for man's salvation. This is the Ευανγέλιον, Gospel glad tidings, the good news of a Savior, who is here by the prophet described.

1. From the material principle of his human nature, that which was administered in his conception by the Virgin. A virgin shall bear a son. What be a virgin and a mother at the same time? Incredible thing indeed, but we find it to be so accomplished. Mat. 1 *ult.* And he knew her not till she had brought forth, etc. The matter which she administered was prepared and sanctified by the Holy Spirit in a wonderful manner, who was the active principle, she being merely passive in the conception of the human nature of our glorious Jesus. Neither does it hence follow that the sacred spirit was the father of Christ's body, inasmuch as in natural generation the father and the son are of the same nature, which Christ as to his body and the Holy Ghost are not.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ is here described from his name, Immanuel, which because of the large and great and excellent significancy of it I thought good to make it the subject of our discourse. We find this name construed in the first chapter of Matthew 23, Immanuel, which being interpreted is μεθ'ήμιν ὁ θεος, *nobiscum Deus*, God with us, or with us is God, the latter part of the word signifying God and the former part signifying with us in the Hebrew language עכטאל. It does in short hold forth the reconciliation of man to God, who had been professedly an enemy to him, this reconciliation is here intimated by the coming together of God and man in one and the same person which was accomplished in Jesus who was very God and very man in one person, θεανθρωπος, which done, the separation wall which had separated between God and man, or separated man from God, is now broken down, and Christ God-man interceding, man is thereby reconciled to God, and in favor with him, that is men such as believe in Christ by faith,

embrace his righteousness and thereby in him are presented spotless and blameless before God. Among the many weighty truths which are enclosed in this glorious name of Christ as a cabin which may be deduced from it I shall insist on this doctrine, that the Lord Jesus Christ is our glorious Immanuel. That the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed God with us. Excellent name.

Man having fallen from that pitch of dignity which he was at first placed in, being made holy and righteous at the first, God was pleased of his rich and free grace to send no less person than his only begotten son, that through him man might not perish but have everlasting life. That by his doing and suffering what man was to have done or suffered, man might be reconciled to God through faith in him, this is the result of the doctrine that Jesus is God become man, for our redemption and deliverance from sin and death. But that this doctrine may be well received and applied, I shall enquire:

Q. (1) In what respect the Lord Jesus Christ is our Immanuel? or in what respect is Jesus God with us? And (2) How does it appear?

Q. (1) In what respect, etc.

A. And I answer in one word that the Lord Jesus Christ may be said to be our Immanuel inasmuch as he is a mediator between an angry and offended God and offending man. We are the offenders, we have violated laws of our sovereign, have trampled under foot the honor of the most high, and by our so doing have merited death and damnation at his hands, yea and eternal banishment from his face, and favorable presence and indeed were like to be cast out into utter darkness, etc., had it not been that the Christ had interceded and proved our mediator. Now that he had so done he is said to be God with us. But more particularly:

1. Christ may be said to be our Immanuel inasmuch as he is God and man, and indeed this seems to be the proper meaning of his being called Immanuel. Though I shall extend the signification further. Christ as he is God is the eternal son of God, and thereby he is distinguished from all other sons of God. There is a threefold son of God, *viz.*,

1. By creation, so Adam (3 Luke *ult.*) is called the Son of God, inasmuch as he was made by God, and after God's own image, in wisdom, righteousness and true holiness.

2. By adoption, such an one is a believer who are called the

adopted children of God, even all believers in Christ, whom he receiveth to the dignity of children, 1 John 12, for Christ's sake, and confers on them a title to the privileges of his family, and makes them partakers of a spiritual inheritance provided for them by Christ. Rom. 8, 17. Gal. 4, 7.

3. By eternal generation, thus Christ, our Redeemer, as he was God was the eternal son of God, and inasmuch as he is the express image of the Father's person according to Heb. 1, 3. Who being the brightness of his glory and express image of his person, by a simile,

1. God knows himself, being infinitely happy thus knowing or conceiving the image of himself is God the Father.

2. God is known of himself, or the image of God is conceived of by himself, and God thus known by himself is God the Son. Thus divines are wont to resemble it. Hence, 1 John 1, he is called the Word of God. Thus I say that Christ as God is the eternal son of God, the second person in the most glorious and adorable Trinity. Thus the Scriptures are full, John 3, 16, Mat. 3, 17, etc.

2. Christ as he is man, he is the son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the promised bud, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Mat. 1, 1, in whom God promised that all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Hence Christ was real man in all things like unto us excepting sin and the manner of subsisting. Heb. 4, 15. Hence Christ often calls himself the son of man. Thus we read, John 1, 1, the Word was made flesh, etc. Now Christ therefore the eternally begotten Son of God, became man, did subsist in one person, inseparably and so to subsist to all eternity. The second person, therefore, of the Trinity had two manners of subsistence, one from eternity in the divine nature, the other after the incarnation in the human nature. For in Christ, Col. 2, 9, dwelt the Godhead bodily. Behold! O Christian, by the eye of thy faith, the most wonderful sight that was ever seen in the world, yea truly admirable! The creator and the creature, the maker and the thing made, God and man, the potter and the clay, infinite and finite, eternal and temporal, unchangeable and changeable, making but one person! And whom having not seen with your bodily eyes, ye love, and whom though now ye see not yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. 1 Peter 1, 8.

3. Christ the Lord, our righteousness, may be called our Immanuel, or God with us, in respect of those offices which he hath

executed upon our account, and as an introduction to a discourse on them it may be convenient to show what are our needs of him and how we require such a mediator as he was to be our Immanuel, or God with us.

And (1) we may consider that whereas in our state of innocency we had a perfect knowledge of God in our mind, we was not only acquainted with the glorious God whom we was to serve but knew what was his will concerning us. His law was written on our hearts. Rom. 2, 15. But we have lost the knowledge of God and his will and we are blinded with ignorance. The God of this world hath blinded our mind, and we are sadly benighted and in a sort of mental Egyptian darkness. 2 Cor. 4, 4. Now being thus woefully ignorant of God and of his will and of ourselves we stood in great need of a prophet to teach and instruct us and to reveal unto us the mysteries of godliness.

(2) We may also consider that whereas we were created in a state of friendship with God, had the position of sweet fellowship and communion with him, we have now altogether lost that and have taken up arms fighting under the devil's banner against God, have proclaimed ourselves open enemies to God and there is in every one of our hearts a secret enemity and hatred against God. Rom. 5, 10, 11. Col. 1, 2. We stand in great need of one to stand between God and us to make reconciliation of us unto God, to make atonement for our sins and to bring us again to a state of friendship with God. We stand in need of one to be a sacrifice for the expiation of our sin and to make intercession for us with God the Father whom we had grievously provoked by our rebellion against and most horrid apostacy from him in rejecting him and denying subjection to his holy and righteous laws.

(3) We may consider that whereas we were in a state of nearness to God and intimate acquaintance with him, had a freedom to walk in all his laws and ordinances and so submit ourselves to his government and was free from enemies, nothing did offend against us, it is now quite otherwise with us. We are now alienated and gone astray from God, have renounced subjection to his laws and other lords and lovers have had dominion over us and we are under bondage to sin, Satan and the world and he rules in our mortal body and we are led captive by him at his will. 2 Tim. 2 *ult.* So that whatsoever temptation he is laying before us we are ready to fall

in with it. Our corrupt natures are as tinder to every spark of temptation, and the devil is continually making inroads and assaults upon us to destroy our peace so that it is with our souls as it was with Israel when there was no judge ruled there was no peace to him that went out nor to him that came in. Now our case being thus truly miserable and deplorable we stand in great need of one to be a king to undertake for us to subdue us to himself, to make us free and ready to submit ourselves to the laws of his kingdom and to yield all due obedience to his laws, to defend us from the assaults and invasions of our enemies, to be the glorious captain of our salvation, to go out before us in our spiritual warfare, against our grand adversaries, that so through his assistance we may conquer all these our insulting enemies. Now beholding this our necessitous case and condition we see plainly that inasmuch as God has appointed a mediator for us to be our surety, wherein he must be our Immanuel, wherein he must stand on our side and be for us. For to answer these our needs which are here plainly laid before our eyes, Christ was annointed and set apart by God the Father to be our mediator. Jn. 61, 1. 45 Ps. 71. For

1. The Lord Jesus Christ may be said to be with us in that he does plainly reveal to us the mind and will of his Father. Surely this is a token of his being with us for him to discover to us the mind and will of his heavenly Father concerning us. This he did by his spirit to the prophets of old and personally when he went about preaching to the people and does now externally in his word and internally by his spirit making it effectual by setting of it home with power. This is his prophetical office, whereby he hath discovered to us the whole counsel of God for our salvation. Hence Jn. 15, 15, Jesus saith to his disciples, I have called you friends and all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Hence he is called a prophet. Acts 3, 22. A prophet — him shall ye hear. Now that Christ should be our prophet it was necessary that he should be both God and man, namely that he should be God that he might perfectly know the will of God, 1 Jn. 18 and 3, 13. 1 Cor. 2, 11. The things of God knoweth no man, etc. And verse 16, for who hath known the mind of the Lord, etc. But we have the mind of Christ. And that he might be able to teach in all ages man's heart by his spirit and 'twas necessary that he should be man that he might the more fitly reveal and unfold it to

men in his own person. Heb. 11. Hath in these last days spoken to us by his son. Thus the Christ was every way well fitted to be the great apostle of our profession as we have it in the 3 Heb. 1, who has perfectly taught us the will of God.

2. Christ may be said to be God with us inasmuch as he stands in our room and stead, acting for us to the incensed Father, which he did in offering up himself a sacrifice for the expiation of our sin, in thereby making an atonement for us and in making intercession for us to God; this Christ did in his priestly office whereby he hath purged and cleansed away the sins of men and that by sacrificing himself and pictured for them the favor of God. 1 Col. 20. By the blood of the cross reconciling, etc. So v. 22, 2 Cor. 5, 15, Rom. 5, 10, being enemies we were reconciled by his death, etc. Thus the Lord Jesus thought it not too much to lay down his life for his enemies. v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Wonderful love indeed! The same was prophesied of him. 53 Is. 6. God laid upon him the iniquities of us all, and he it was that came from Edom with dyed garments and he that trod the winepress of the wrath of God. Is. 63, 1, 2, 3. This expiation of sin by the blood of Christ was typified of old by those ceremonies and sacrificial rites which were the Jews' Gospel, where might be observed the altar and the gift. Answerably Christ is to be considered as a priest, the sacrifice and the altar. He was a priest as he was God man. His divine nature was the altar and his human nature the sacrifice, whence the expiation of sin was wont in the Scriptures to be signified by the spilling of his blood, by his death his soul is said to be made an offering for sin. 53 Is. 10. The sufferings of which was rendered virtuous by the altar, his divine nature which sanctified the gift. And it was necessary that he should be both God and man that he might be an all sufficient high priest. For it was necessary that he should be man that he might suffer and die for the expiation of sin which the divine nature was not capable of and that he should be God to render his sufferings of sufficient worth, virtue and value. Heb. 4, 14, 15.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ may be said to be God with us inasmuch as he standeth on our side acting for us against our enemies, hence called, as has been said, the captain of our salvation that he might not only subdue us and conquer us but subdue and conquer our enemies for us. This he does in his kingly office whereby he does rightfully dispense all things to man which may bend to his salva-

tion. Thus the Christ is our glorious king who exerciseth rule and authority in his church which is his kingdom, and their glorious captain under whose banner if they fight the good fight of faith they may subdue principalities and powers in proving the helmet of salvation, being shod with the preparation of the gospel, they shall at last become conquerors, yea more than conquerors through him who hath loved them and given himself for them as it is expressed Rom. 8, 37. Now it was likewise necessary that Christ should be both God and man that he might be our complete king of his church, *viz.*, that he should be God that he might be a spiritual king ruling over the hearts and consciences of men and bear an entire rule and authority over the souls. And that he should be man that he might be an head to them of the same nature of the body. Otherwise God's church would be like Nebuchadnezer's image whose head was of gold and his body of iron, clay, brass, etc. 2 Daniel.

After this order did Christ execute these offices in his state of humiliation and exaltation wherein first he went about teaching and preaching the gospel and secondly he offered up himself a sacrifice on the cross and thirdly he entered into his kingly glory in heaven.

I come now to the second inquiry.

2 Q. How does it appear that Christ is thus our Immanuel? etc. I answer to the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to these things 'tis because there is no light in them. Is. 8, 20. But there is light in them or else we should have had no spiritual light and understanding in these things. Search the Scriptures (says our Savior) for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me. Jn. 5, 30. And we have a more sure word of prophesy which we should do well to give heed unto and not only so but we have also a most sure word of testimony to flee unto for the confirmation of our faith. Our doctrine is therefore an article of faith which we are not to discount but believe. 'Tis a position which Christ told Peter that flesh and blood had not revealed but the Father. Mat. 16, 17. And therefore we must not think that it is that which can be comprehended by reason but it may and ought to be apprehended by faith inasmuch as the Scriptures have revealed to us that Jesus Christ is our great Immanuel. The Sacred Scriptures * the oracles and edicts of heaven are very full, clear and plain in the discovery of a way of salvation by the

* An ocean for an elephant, a river for a lamb.

mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ. Hence they fail not in the discovery of the glorious person of Jesus and the properties thereof no more than of his offices and benefits. And very necessary it is unto salvation that every one believe this glorious article of faith. It is one of the greatest mysteries that was ever revealed to man that the glorious son of God, the second person of the most sacred and mysterious trinity, should condescend of his divine grace to leave the Father's bosom, come down out of Heaven, take upon him our nature (he took not upon him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham. Heb. 2, 16), be born of a woman, in one person forever continuing to be both God and man, submit himself to the law of God and all the shame, reproaches, ignominies and sufferings which men and devils, yea all the powers of the infernal pit conspiring against him, nay die, be buried, that is unto his human nature and all that man who had wilfully apostatized from and rebelled against him might be restored into the favor of God who desires no such thing. I say fully to comprehend this by our reason is impossible, which if it were affirmed by men or angels would be incredible, and although delivered by God himself remains so unless God by his omnipotent spirit persuade men to it. I would now endeavor to see what goodness may be found resulting from this truth.

(*Afternoon*)

And I find it profitable for instruction, reproof, examination, exhortation, comfort and encouragement. And the first use shall be for instruction and learning and this doctrine and what has been said of the explication and confirmation thereof gives us

1. To learn that the Christ is every way an all-sufficient savior, on all accounts such an one as does every way answer the need and necessity of man, let man's need and necessity be what it will, here is that which may satisfy them. Here is a sufficiency of that Balm of Gilead which might heal whatsoever sin sick soul that will appear to need it. (Jer. 8, 22.) Here is bread to satisfy the hungry (John 6, 54-6) and drink to satisfy the thirsty soul (John 6, 55) if it does but truly hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Mat. 5, 6.) And whatsoever grace and good qualification we have lost in Christ it may be restored. In short, though we have lost the image of God which consisted in wisdom (Col. 3, 10) whereby we know our duty,

righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4, 14, whereby we were not only freely disposed to do our duty but also actually perform it, I say though we have lost all these excellent qualifications and all the happiness which consequently they caused us to enjoy, yet there is enough in Christ to supply our various needs and wants, be they never so many or great. 1 Jn. 14, 16.

2. Learn hence how amazing, matchless, and inconceivable the grace, love, and compassion of God to fallen men is. 3 Jn. 16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, etc. That God should take upon him our nature for our redemption and this will appear the more wonderful if we consider these few things, *viz.,*

1. That our rebellion against and apostacy from God is wilful. We did freely and voluntarily and knowingly run head against God. Our first sin was wilfully committed against the greatest light that ever any sin was committed and all our secondary acts are of the same tincture. We should any of us think that if a man had wilfully and knowingly fallen out with his neighbor, and the party offended should seek reconciliation at no less terms than making over his own son to him for his servant forever, whom the party offending desiring not any such thing, we should think that man to be love indeed all love, but how much more in God who is an infinite being and we finite creatures, our Creator not our neighbor.

2. That God has no need of us. He could have found out other ways to have glorified his grace. He could have bestowed it on the angels that sinned who are far more capacious than we are to glorify God. If we had done our duty we were to [have] accounted ourselves unprofitable servants (Luke 17, 10), how much more if instead of our duty we sin. We are both undeserving and ill-deserving of the grace of God when instead of grace we have merited anger from him.

3. That we have naturally no inclination or desire after being reconciled to God. Nay we are not only without desire of that reconciliation and favor of God but unwilling to be reconciled. Jn. 5, 40. And ye will not come to me that ye may have life. We are altogether unwilling to be beholden to God for the least crumb of favor. It might look more favorably on us if we had so much as a desire after anything that is good. Our souls are saying naturally, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Job 21, 14. And that we will not have this man to rule over us; we are

naturally self-sufficient creatures and are so full of our own excellency that we don't count it worth our while to be beholding to God. See our state fairly painted out in 16 Ezk. 2, etc. Now considering our case to be thus most wretched and deplorable we may fairly conclude that it is an act of matchless and unparalleled love and good will that ever any man is brought home to God. We may with the Apostle cry out — unsearchable riches, Eph. 3, 8, and great love, Eph. 2, 4. God commended his love to us, Rom. 5, 8. 1 Jn. 4, 9. In this was manifest the love of God towards us because God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him. But alas! these expressions do not in the one half express it for it is unspeakable and unsearchable. Eph. 3, 8. O the matchless, boundless and unfathomable ocean of the love of God! Out of this ocean run those rivers of pleasure forevermore spoken of in the 16th Ps. *ult.* What heart can in the least conceive of the thousandth part of it? What tongue (surely neither of man nor angels) can express it for, 1 Cor. 2, 9, eye hath not seen nor hath ear heard neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Indeed it is that which man's or angel's largest capacity will not reach. 1 Pet. 1, 12.

U. 2. Reproof. Is Christ God with us and that in every respect we have heard? Hence all unbelievers are justly reprovable and they are chiefly of two sorts:

1. Such as are in a state of nature. Such as are hardening their hearts and deafening their ears at the voice of Christ who is incenting them to be reconciled but yet they continue like to the deaf adder. For has God been of his rich and free grace pleased to consider man in his low and wretched condition, has he remembered him in his low state, for his mercy endureth forever, and to take pity of him being thus undone, sinful, wretched and defiled? Has he showed himself so desirous of our salvation as to send one for our redemption, and reconciliation even no less person than his only begotten son, having delivered him up to the death of the cross and laid upon him the iniquity of the children of men and to pour on him the dreadful vials of his fury and wrath which poor wretched man was forever to have sweltered under? Has God not spared his own son but freely delivered him up for us all? Rom. 8, 22. O wonderful love of God indeed. 3 Jn. 16. Has the Christ condescended

to come down out of heaven and leave the Father's bosom and take upon him our nature and tabernacle in the flesh, undergo all manner of reproaches, sorrows and afflictions from both men and devils, yea undergo the Father's wrath — yea sweat great drops of blood in the sustaining the unsupportable anger of God, Luke 22, 43, yea at last to die and expire his soul, be buried, yea continue under the power and in the vale of death, having done and suffered all that justice did demand of him for man? And has he sent his spirit to make application of what he hath done and suffered to man, moving of him to adopt of Christ at the terms of the Gospel; moving on the heart of man does Christ stand knocking at the door of man's heart for entrance until his head is wet with the dew and his locks with the drops of the night. 5 Cant. 2. I say, has Christ done all these things for us that man might be reconciled to God? And yet will not such hard hearted sinners submit themselves unto him and lay down the weapons of their rebellion and embrace him for their savior. Let such men consider that 'tis their sins that have cost the Lord Jesus all these sorrows and sufferings, will they not relent upon the least. Surely might not the consideration of these things be enough to melt the heart of a stone. Might not a narration of the sufferings of Jesus be enough to draw tears from the eyes of the most hard hearted creature upon the earth, especially considering that their sins had been the cause thereof. But what did Christ say to them, 5 Jn. 40. And I may turn unto them and say in the words of our Savior himself, Luke 13, 3. Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Behold Christ is offering to be reconciled. He is tendering his own blood to wash you from these your sins. Now if you will not come to Christ, believe in him and embrace him, there remains nothing for you but that you be eternally banished from his sight and favorable countenance. Hear your sentence which Christ has pronounced. And as for those unprofitable servants which would not that I should rule over them take them and slay them before mine eyes. As Mat. 25, 30, take ye the unprofitable servant, and cast him into utter darkness, etc. But if you will but believe in Christ there remains for you an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled that fadeth not away, by him prepared for you eternal in the heavens. 1 Pet. 14.

2. This doctrine reproves persons who are regenerate who yet are under the prevalency of unbelief. Let such consider that Jesus

has gone a step further with them, he has made a special application of what Christ has done and suffered for them unto them and has given them the earnest of the spirit, 2 Cor. 1, 20, has entered into a covenant with them and theirs even a covenant in all things well ordered and sure and has embraced them in the arms of his love and favor. And has given them apprehensions of the infinite riches of his abounding grace and to experience the light of his favorable countenance which is better than life and the tokens of his love. Now will they so vilely treat the Lord who has done so great things for them? Will they stand aloof from the Lord and deny him entertainment? Consider that you do herein grieve the bowels of tender mercy. You do thus abuse the spirit of God which would have sealed you to the day of redemption. You deal very hardly with the Lord Jesus Christ who has not spared to shed his blood for the remission of sin. Suppose that one of you had made one of their neighbors a special favorite and had conferred upon him many very great favors, been helpful to him in a time of very great extremity, etc. And you should go and knock at his door and show yourself willing to enjoy his society and instead of lovingly entertaining you he should come and abuse you, denying you entrance, railing on you, etc. You would think that he very evilly requited you and that he dealt very hardly with you, etc. Now consider that you have been much more abusive to the Lord Jesus Christ by how much the more great favors he hath conferred on you and by how much the more you abuse him, and let these considerations stir such up to give their souls no rest till God be pleased to be found of them in the Lord and till they have made their peace with him for their thus abusing of his divine grace and having got nigher to God let them be careful they abuse him not in like manner as they have done.

U. 3. Examination. This doctrine that the Lord is such an excellent mediator may put us upon examination of ourselves whether we are giving entertainment unto the Lord Jesus Christ, this great Immanuel. This duty is that which the apostle exhorts the Corinthians unto in that 2 Cor. 13, 5. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ be in you except you be reprobates. Let us therefore address ourselves to this.

And 1. Did we ever see our own wretchedness by sin? Were we

ever convinced of the desperate wickedness of our own hearts? Did we ever find by experience that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? 17 Jer. 9. Were we ever loaded with an heavy weight and burden of sin? Has sin ever appeared to us in its own heinous nature in its true colors? Was we ever brought to mourn, repent and relent over ourselves for sin inasmuch as it is that which offends God and is ruinous and destructive to our own souls? If we have not experienced these things it is altogether unlikely that we should make any application to any remedy.

2. Did we ever see that we were helpless and hopeless without a Savior? Did we ever find that in us naturally there dwells no good thing and that there is nothing in us which could in the least commend us unto God and that there is nothing in the world which is able to give us any relief, hence that all the creatures say that it is not in them? Did we ever empty ourselves of our self-excellency and self-righteousness? Are we not deluding ourselves as in the 3 Rev. 17, 18. Are we not trusting to our own hearts when God has told us that he that trusteth to his own heart is a fool, Prov. 28, 26? Are we not in love with ourselves and therefore thinking God is so too? Are we not flattering ourselves in our own eyes till our iniquity be like to become an hateful thing? 36 Ps. 2. For if it be thus with us we are told what will be the issue of it, even death. Rom. 6, 23. It will prove to be like the wine which the wise man speaks of, 23 Prov. 32, that it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, when our portion shall be that place where the worm dieth not and where the fire is not quenched.

3. Was we ever brought to the foot of Christ for mercy? Did we ever go to him that he would take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, Hos. 14, 2? Was we ever willing that Christ should take what course pleased him to glorify his grace in our salvation? Was we willing to take up our cross and follow him and did we lay down the weapons of our rebellion and submit ourselves to him? These are the tokens of our being in an estate of favor with God through the mediation and intercession of our great Immanuel.

4. Did we ever experience that Christ's yoke was easy and that his burden was light? Mat. 1, 28. And did we upon our taking the yoke of Christ upon us find any rest to our souls? Have we found that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and that all our paths are indeed paths of peace? Prov. 3, 17. The yoke of Christ

and the ways of wisdom are indeed not easy nor pleasant to a carnal heart but to a gracious heart they are and only to such. And the truly gracious do take great delight in them. They never called Christ an hard master as indeed sinners have done.

U. 4. Exhortation. Is the Lord as our doctrine informs us and consequently an all-sufficient savior as we have heard? O let us be exhorted since we are very graciously invited so to do to believe in Christ and in him alone for salvation. To believe or have faith in Christ is by assenting to the truth and consenting to the goodness of gospel promises upon divine authority and thereby to receive and embrace the Lord as our Savior and on him alone upon the terms of the gospel. Now be we exhorted with such a faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the prosecution of this use I shall first propose some motives and shall secondly give some directions. And for the motives

1. We may consider that we are in great need of Christ. Our wants and necessities are very great. We are holden under a spiritual bondage and slavery to sin, Satan and the world and we are likely to continue in the slavery until at last we meet with a sore and amazing sentence of punishment for it. Now there is no such thing as security from it but by faith in Christ. No possibility, yea though we should offer 1,000 of rams nor 10,000 of rivers of oil, nay if we should give the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our soul. Mica. 6, 7. But only faith in Christ. By grace ye are saved through faith. 2 Eph. 8. And there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby they can be saved but this name Christ, as we have it, 4 Acts 12.

2. Consider that without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11, 6. And it is a dreadful thing to be at variance with God, to be at enmity with God, who is a consuming fire, Heb. 12, last, and will be so in a terrible manner to all that are out of Christ. The great and dreadful God who can crush us in a moment is displeased with us every moment we live and breathe without faith. It is an heinous sin to live in unbelief, a sin of great ingratitude towards God, a sin of the first magnitude, a sin that he will not repent and easily pass over, but a sin that he will take vengeance of sooner or later, that which if we persist in will sink us down to the lowest hell. Can we think that God will overlook our despising the riches

of his grace and forbearance and long suffering? No but surely he will take vengeance on us for it.

3. Let us consider the great advantage that there is in believing, namely eternal life. 3 Jn. 15. Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. So v. 18. So chapter 6, 47. And infinite other places. So we read of joy and peace in believing. Rom. 15, 13. Now let us seriously reason with ourselves. Will we be so careless of the eternal welfare and well-being of our souls as to persist and allow ourselves in unbelief? Is heaven and eternal joy and happiness so little a thing in our eyes and do we think so diminutively of these glorious things as that we will not take pains with ourselves? This must needs be a sad symptom indeed.

4. Let us consider the fatal consequences of unbelief. 3 John 18. He that believeth not, etc. So Chap. 3, 36. Do we account that eternal death is a small thing? Can our hands be strong or our heart endure the thoughts of eternal torment in the flames of hell? Will not sinners in Zion be afraid of this? Will not fearfulness seize on the hypocrites? Who among us can dwell with devouring fire? Which of us can endure everlasting burning? 33 Is. 13. Can we think of these things without trembling? Sorrowful if we can! Our state is much like to that of a man ready to be overwhelmed with water in danger of being drowned every moment and can we pass off these thoughts without heart achings? Now there's only that one remedy, Christ received by faith. Our once being in that ark of safety alone will sweeten these dreadful thoughts and give us true ease and comfort. Let this then move us to faith on Christ.

And for direction let us endeavor

1. After a clear and sensible discovery of our needy condition, of that great need we stand in of Christ and of faith in him, of our inexorable necessity and misery, that naturally we are heirs of wrath and lie open to eternal wrath and nothing but the slender thread of our lives in the way which may by a small blow be cut in sunder and then we shall inevitably sink down into the pit of perpetual torment and misery. Let us be convinced of our original sin, the sin of our natures and the first sin which we are guilty of and which unrepented of will damn us. And also our actual transgressions which are innumerable and very heinous. Never an hour we live but we are committing and guilty of sins which will prove fatal if unrepented of. Let this be the first step. And

2. Let us labor to see the utter insufficiency of any thing short of Christ to relieve us; of the emptiness of all things short of this great Immanuel to help us. O let us be careful that we put not trust in ourselves and in our own righteousness. For all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We are all as an unclean thing, etc. Our inquities like the wind have taken us away. 64 Is. 6. Let us therefore beware of depending on ourselves or anything that is in us. Let us labor to empty ourselves of all our own excellencies which we are apt to be greatly in love with, for indeed our very best duties might be guilty — cast as dung in our faces. They are of poor account in the light of God, such as God will not find in his heart to delight in, such as he cannot set his heart upon, such as God loathes. 1 Is. 11, 12, 13 and 14, etc. Unless they be performed with the merits of Christ, and why then should we make any account of them ourselves. O let us beware of flattering and deceiving ourselves with false hopes, for if we so do we are in great danger of going hoping down to the pit of misery.

3. Let us endeavor to work our souls up into an ardent and earnest desire after the grace of God, after being with favor with God, and being interested in Christ, in order to it, of the excellency of being holy and righteous, of being in a state of conformity to the law of God which is holy and just and good. Rom. 7, 12. And knowing that to be in such a state is to have peace of conscience, to have joy unspeakable and full of glory, and to be in such a state takes away all possibility of falling away, we can never fail of the grace of God but we shall hold out in the way of well doing seeking for glory and honor till at last eternal life shall be our portion. Rom. 2, 7. If we are in a state of grace, yea to be in a state of grace is to be every way in an excellent and happy condition indeed, seeing these things let us desire them and desiring them let us believe in Christ the purchaser of them and then we shall enjoy them. But it may be some may object and say that it is not in man's power to believe and that faith is the gift of God. Eph. 2, 8. And that it is wrought by the spirit of God. Ans. True faith is the gift of God and it is not in man's power to believe, but notwithstanding man is bound as much to endeavor after it as if it was in his power. Man is to strive with all his might to believe. Luke 13, 24. Strive. Now faith is the gate to that straight way and God is making very many great and gracious promises that he will lend us his assistance if

we do our utmost and therefore to be in a way of endeavor is to be in a way of a blessing inasmuch as God has said be up and doing and I will be with you. O let us then endeavor with all our might to believe and also to obey the Lord, to venture and roll our loads upon him if peradventure he may look upon us with an eye of favor and embrace us.

5th and last use is of encouragement and comfort to those who stand in need. The Lord only knows who of us they be that are deeply sensible of their need of Christ and of their undoneness without him, and who are afraid to come to this great Immanuel. Is the Lord Immanuel, is he God with us? Is he an all-sufficient and every way a well accomplished savior? Then be not discouraged. Here is great encouragement for you to venture your souls upon him. He fully knows the exigencies and needs of your souls and he is a God of bowels and tender compassions and he can find in his heart to have mercy. Who has proclaimed the Lord the Lord God gracious and merciful, etc. 34 Exod. 6. His thoughts are not as your thoughts nor his ways as your ways. 55 Is. 8. We must not limit the grace of God inasmuch as we know that it is infinite. Christ is not ignorant of your grievances but he is well acquainted with your temptations who has been in all things tempted like as you are. Heb. 4, 15. And how many gracious invitations has he made unto you. Mat. 11, 28. Come unto me, says Christ, all that are weary, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Jn. 6, 37.

Be therefore encouraged to go to him that he would take off your spiritual burdens and set you at liberty, that he would take off those iron fetters wherewith you are bound and set you free, that he would rescue your souls from death and your lives from going down into the pit. The Apostle did indeed say, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. Rom. 7, 24. But could immediately add, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, for by him alone we can obtain victory. Depend on Christ then that he would be the captain of your salvation and go out with you against your spiritual adversaries and enemies and he will be with you and make you to rejoice in him, yea you shall become more than conquerors through him that hath loved you and given himself for you in the aforementioned Rom. 8, 3, etc. And it shall be for your good that you have been afflicted. 119 Ps. 11. For all things shall work together for your good. What says God to such in the

54 Is. 11, 12. O thou afflicted, tossed and not comforted, behold, etc. If you do sow in tears you shall reap in joy. 126, 5. God will give you beauty for ashes and garments of prayer for spirits of heaviness. 61 Is. 3. So 40 Is. 12. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. . . . for her warfare is accomplished, her iniquities, etc. So. 51 Is. 11. The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing into Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away, etc. It shall be that you shall, beholding as in a glass darkly the glory of God, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory till at last you shall be made to enjoy an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Which the Lord of his grace bring us all unto.

Amen.

S. J.

Glory, thanks and prayer be given to God for his help.
May 22, 1715. 34 Psal. 3.

Title Page and Outline of Johnson's Fifth Sermon

Sermon V.

My Examination Sermon on Matthew, 1 Chap., 21 v. Delivered for Probation for the Ministry, at Guilford. To be August, 1715, but was March 20, 1716.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

A Table of Contents — giving An Idea of the Whole Sermon

In this Discourse the text Matthew 1, 21, opened and analyzed. Doctrine is: The Lord Jesus Christ is a Savior to all that believe in Him. And it is

I. Introduced by 12 propositions.
II. Illustrated, describing
    1. The Lord Jesus Christ from his
        Nature:
            Divine
            Humane
        Offices:
            Prophet
            Priest
            King
        Redemption in:
            Humiliation and
            Exaltation.
        Benefits:
            Justification.
            Adoption.
            Sanctification.
            Glorification.
    2. Those who believe in him;
        Where faith is described.
III. Proved from sundry Scriptures.

IV. Applied in a use of
Instruction
Reproof
Exhortation and
Consolation.

Apud Domum Paternam — August 10, 1715. *Aetatis meae* 19.

Sermon vi.

A Sermon preached at East Guilford, Feb., 1715-16, and at North Middleton, May 20, 1716.

Upon that Word of the Lord in the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews, the XII Chapter and 14 verse.

The first preached at West Haven upon June 10, 1716.

Man being originally made after the image of God his great creator, it necessarily follows that the higher he attains towards a likeness to God the higher he arrives towards both the perfection of his nature and his happiness and felicity, because he cannot arrive at a greater perfection than to be like his Maker, nor to greater felicity than in the enjoyment of him, and the more he is like God, the more he pleaseth him and the more he pleaseth him the more he enjoys of him, inasmuch as it is the perfection of any being, and so consequently of man, that is its happiness.

It was not without consideration of these things that our great Apostle exhorts us to follow holiness, for holiness is the very image of God and hence the more holy man is, the more like God is he and consequently the more happy, inasmuch as the more he is like God the more he pleaseth him, which only is consistent with his happiness. Well might the Apostle then exhort us to follow holiness inasmuch as he does therein exhort us to pursue both the perfection of our natures and our utmost happiness and felicity. The Apostle has therefore in this exhortation much consulted the interest of mankind and they will much consult their own interest if they practice it. The text now proposed is so entire to itself that we have no need to look into the context for the sense thereof, but we may at once fall upon the words.

The text is an exhortation to follow, etc. In which words we may observe:

1. The duty here exhorted to, and that is to follow peace and holiness. Now it is most true that holiness compriseth all that rectitude of the whole man both in his external conversation before man,

and in his internal sincerity before God or his self-consciousness of his integrity even as it is often used in the Scriptures for the sincerity of man's obedience both external and internal. But yet I understand the Apostle by peace to mean a blameless conversation before men, and by holiness to mean the sincerity of his conversation both towards God and man before God. By peace a blameless innocent and harmless life with men, and by holiness a conscientious and upright life with God, peace being referred to a walk with men and holiness to a walk with God. I say I take that to be the reason why the Apostle here distinguisheth these two, not but that holiness even in the Apostle's sense imports the sincerity of all our duty and obedience, for holiness consists in a sincere disposition to live both peaceably with men and uprightly with God, and therefore I make choice of that only because that does comprise in it even peace itself.

2. The reason of the duty, and that is without which no man shall see God, which whether it has reference to each part of the duty, or only to holiness it matters not, inasmuch as he that lives a holy life, lives both a peaceable life with man and a conscientious life with God, but most surely it most strongly argues that we ought to follow holiness because without which we can never see God, for holiness is the means whereby to attain to the blessed vision and fruition of God in glory.

1. By holiness then I understand a sincere disposition to conform ourselves to all God's commands even whatsoever is revealed to be our duty.

2. By follow I understand a sincere endeavor after such a disposition.

3. By seeing God I understand happiness in the enjoyment of God, both in time and eternity, for in seeing and beholding the favorable countenance of God consists the happiness of a rational creature.

Doctrine: that Holiness is the Only Way to True Happiness.

The very heathen themselves who had nothing but the light of nature to be guided by in the pursuance of their happiness, had discovered the truth of this doctrine, namely that the direct tendency of the practice of virtue was to lead men to be like God and consequently to bring him to the enjoyment of God. Hence we find one of them (Seneca) expressing himself after this manner. "I

find," says he, "incomparably more pleasure in the practice of virtue than 'tis possible for the greatest sensualist in the world to find in the satisfying of his sensual desires," and whatever sensual Epicureans may imagine yet reason will dictate that the way to be happy is to be like God our Maker, and the way to be like God is to conform ourselves to his will, which is to practice holiness in the fear of God. Therein we are like God and therein we please him. But blessed be God we have something better than the mere light of nature to be guided by in the pursuance of our happiness, even the most sure word of God which shineth as a bright light in a dark place in attendance of which rule we shall undoubtedly arrive at felicity.

And in clearing and establishing of this doctrine, I shall (I) explain what I understand by holiness; and (II) what I understand by happiness; and (III) demonstrate how holiness leads unto happiness; and (IV) improve it in uses.

I. Then by holiness I understand in general-idea of it to be a sincere disposition both to believe and practice all whatsoever God has revealed to be believed and done so that holiness is the rectitude of the inclinations and actions of the mind. It follows that holiness in its highest perfection is conformity to the image of God, for that is the image of God, and that is in short nothing else than a sincere disposition and inclination of the will to act and practice according to the dictates of a rectified understanding, for God's will is nothing but what is highly reasonable. Now as this holiness is the rectitude of the inclinations and actions of the soul, we shall contemplate it in the several acts of obedience both toward God and man. But antecedent to them we may note that 'tis nothing else but right reason is the directory of whatsoever actions of obedience, for the will of God is the rule indeed of our obedience, but we may know that the will of God as the rule of our practice is both highly reasonable in itself and also the reason which God has implanted in the reasonable creature will (if rectified to its native perspicuity) dictate what the will of God is. Rom. 12, 1, 2. VII, 12, 16. But to return to the several acts of obedience wherein the rectitude appears, (1) toward God and (2) toward men.

I. It appears in the duties toward God as:

1. The holy soul sincerely believes all and every divine testimony whatsoever, and in assenting to what God reveals, it does cast itself

upon God embracing of him and leaning upon him, and trusting and confiding in him, making God the center of all his rest. 2 Sam. XXII, 19. Is. XXII, 2, 3, 4 and L, 10. Heb. XI, 1. This holy soul is so confident of the truth and goodness of God that it dares venture its eternal weal upon it. It so believes the promises as to embrace the good promised and so believes the threatenings as to flee from the evil threatened. Even as a child grasps fast about the father's neck with a confidence that the father is sufficiently able to uphold it, even so the holy soul embraces God. Many instances we have of this in the Word of God of the holy men of old, Abram, David, Daniel, and many others. Job especially in the XIII, 15. And as the holy soul believes all divine testimonies, so especially it being sensible of its wretched condition by sin and of its helpless and remediless condition, and of the all-sufficiency of Christ for a Savior, it assents to the gospel promises and in them embraceth Christ for his savior as a complete mediator upon gospel terms. By faith it casts itself at the foot of free mercy in Christ and resolves all into the free grace of God, self-loathing and self-judging, and self-emptying, looking upon itself as nothing, and upon Christ as all. And indeed he that has not the faith can not have true holiness, this being the spring head and fountain of all other grace. Jn. XV, 5.

2. The holy soul sincerely hopes and without the least hesitation expects the fulfilment of whatsoever God has promised. Faith eyes God as present, hope eyes him as future, for by hope the soul expects with all satisfaction that God will forever continue to be what it at present believes him to be, hence the whole difference between faith and hope is in this that faith looks on God and his promises as present good, but hope as a future good. Now the soul by this hope expecting God forever to continue to be what he at present believes him to be, does thereupon patiently wait upon God, possessed that God will fulfil his Word, in his own due time. For the nature of this grace we may see 1 Pet. I, 21. Rom. VIII, 24. Phil. I, 20. And possessed with this hope the soul is constantly animated with an endeavor after greater degrees of holiness. 1 Jn. 33.

3. The holy soul discovering by his eyes of faith and hope the excellency and amiableness of the divine perfections does love God as the chief good, for God being the most perfect being, all his

perfections being truly amiable and the spiritual eye of the soul beholding of them, it can do no other than be influenced with love to him, and hence the soul looks on nothing amiable in the creatures but only what it looks upon as divine from God. The soul enflamed with this love does vehemently and ardently desire and long for and reach after more of the fellowship and communion with God, and is never at rest but when it is under some sensible tokens of his favor upon the experience whereof it is filled with unspeakable delight, being in the enjoyment of God at the center of its rest and contentment. And from this love of God naturally flows a lively, vigorous putting forward after further degrees of holiness, for the holy soul being after the image of God and seeing the amiableness of being like God, it labors more and more after a likeness and conformity to him. See what manner of love it is. Deut. VI, 5. 1 Jn., IV, 19. 1 Jn. II, 15.

4. The holy soul not only loves God but being sensible of the awfulness of his majesty and of the infinite distance there is between God and it, is possessed with a filial and obediential fear of God, not a slavish servile fear, but a childlike humble submissive fear; upon the sense and discovery of God's awful majesty it lies grovelling in the dust of humility before God. And yet it not only fears the Lord and his greatness but it also fears the Lord and his goodness, and being possessed with this holy fear, it uses all imaginable care lest it should in any thing offend against God. Behold it in Ps. 76, 7. Heb. XII, 28. Ps. V, 7. Ps. CXV, 10.

5. The holy soul is free and willing to serve God in attendance of all those means, manners and seasons of worship as are of his own appointment and institution, and is far from chalking out paths of its own to walk in, but is of such a disposition as to attend God's own appointments, not contriving ways of its own, as being sensible that God best knows what methods will best please him, and therefore being willing to please God in all that it does it is willing to attend his institutions.

II. And as to duties of obedience towards men, I shall not need to instance in particulars but in general the holy soul does for God's sake and because it is his will, endeavor to walk inoffensively with all men, sincerely loves all his neighbors, and that because of and so far forth as there appears of the image of God in his neighbor, as he loves God above all things, so he loves his image wherever

he finds it. That is indeed the very ground and only ground and reason wherefore we should love our neighbor as might be evidenced from several scriptures, and as he loves his brother, so he is very tender of his honor, life, chastity, goods, being a man of truth and contentment in all which he is a sincere friend to his neighbor as love is described. 1 Jn. 3, 23, and 4, 11, 12, 20. 1 Pet. 1, 22. Jn. 13, 34. Yea the sincerity of this duty is a considerable argument to evidence our good estate, as 1 Jn. III, 14. We know that we love God because we love his image.

III. I might here add another head, of passive obedience, for the holy soul is not only of a free disposition to do as God will have him do, but to be as God would have him be. He receives every thing from God's hands, as the best and manifests no sort of dislike at any of God's dispensations, but with a calm and sedate spirit sits down contented and silent under all God's dealings, as sensible that God best knows what is most fitting for him. XXXIX Is. 3. These then are the several duties of obedience wherein this heaven born disposition of the soul appears.

II. The second thing proposed is to show what I understand by happiness in the doctrine. To which I answer that by happiness I understand the smiles of God's favorable countenance in time and the blessed vision and fruition of him in glory to eternity. Ps. XVI, *ult.* And indeed there can be no other happiness which can give satisfaction and contentment to the immortal soul of man, all the sensitive pleasures that any sensualist can immerse himself in, will say it is not in them, neither is it possible that the objects of the senses which are temporal and finite and mutable should give satisfaction to an immaterial, immortal spirit. No, surely 'tis nothing short of an infinite, eternal and unchangeable being, to wit, God himself that can satisfy the cravings of a rational immortal spirit. Ps. XVI, 5. III, 29. God is called the God of comfort. 2 Cor. I, 3. And indeed this is not a groundless, irrational contentment and satisfaction, but it is a well-grounded and rational happiness which the holy soul finds in the light and smiles of God's countenance, yea it is indeed that which is only consistent with reason, and the favor of God is both morally and naturally the happiness of the holy soul as

1. Morally inasmuch as God is pleased to grant the enjoyment of his favor as a reward to virtue and the practice of holiness. Gen. XV, 1.

2. Naturally inasmuch as the enjoyment of God's favor was man's happiness in innocency, and when he was in perfection of holiness, and it is really consistent with a rational creature's nature that it be possessed with a sense of the favor of its maker, without which it cannot enjoy itself. CXIX Ps. 165. And this happiness consists in three things, *viz.*, (1) vision of God's face, (2) assimilation, and (3) satisfaction, for the soul upon a discovery of the glorious and ineffable perfections of God is enflamed with love to him, whereby it is excited to pursue a likeness to him and rationally concluding that if it be like him it pleaseth him and knoweth that in pleasing of him it can't but be happy, it does thereupon take unspeakable satisfaction and contentment and acquiescence in him. 2 Cor. III, *ult.* 1 Jn. III, 2. Ps. XVII, 15. Much might be said here, but we must pass to the

III. To show how holiness leads to happiness, and we may behold in these several propositions, which shall be no other than the very steps wherein holiness treads in leading of the soul to happiness.

1. Holiness we have said to be the rectitude of the inclinations and actions of the soul. That this is the true idea of holiness, I think no man will question that consults the Scriptures. We will look on two texts for it. 1 Thes. II, 10 and III, *ult.* From which texts 'tis evident that the apostle intends the sincere unblamable rectitude of the inclinations and actions of the soul, and this seems to be the proper import of it in our common acceptation of it.

2. These dispositions and actions of the soul can be no further right than they are conformable or agreeable to right reason. Nothing is more clear than that the moral actions of a rational creature must be determined by its reason, and if they are good by right reason because of the intimate relation between truth and goodness and if bad by erroneous reason because on the contrary falsehood infers evil, for all moral actions are rational. Rom. VII, 1.

3. The will of God revealed to be the rule of our actions is most highly agreeable to right reason. It would be highly blasphemous to say the contrary, because it would argue imperfection in him who is the most perfect being, for we are assured that it is impossible for God to either deceive or be deceived, whose understanding is infinite and will holy. Heb. 6, 28.

4. Hence the actions of the soul are no further agreeable to the

dictates of right reason than as they are conformable to the will of God, for it is the same thing to say that they are conformable to right reason and to the will of God, yea they are even therefore reasonable because they are his will. Lev. II, 44.

5. The motions of the soul being conformable to the will of God and consequently to right reason render the soul like God, for in that the motions of the soul are conformable to the will of God, it may be said of it that it is after the image of God. We can't more properly say a thing is like another than in saying it is conformable to it. Eph. 4, 24.

6. The soul being upon this account like God it does therefore please him, and indeed it can do no other than so far forth as it is like him or agreeable to his will even as a father with his son or a master with his servant is pleased if he do like him agreeable to his will. Is. 69, 30, 31.

7. In that the holy soul pleaseth God by being like him it follows that it enjoys his favor and the light and smiles of his countenance. That indeed is the highest happiness of the rational creature that it is like to and pleaseth God his maker, and 'tis impossible to conceive of a greater happiness than such soul is possessed with as his reward. 119 Ps. 1.

8. This enjoyment of the favor of God or the light or smiles of his countenance is the soul's happiness. What can be conceived of as a greater happiness than the precious smiles of God's favorable countenance, for he that enjoys God enjoys all that can make him happy. God is the center of the soul's happiness and rest. for God is the fulness of all good, infinite and eternal. O blessed soul-satisfied favor. Ps. 63, 3 and 16, *ult.* 2 Cor. 4, 17.

9. Now what has been here discovered is consistent with some men in the world in some degree. There are some men who are arrived to such a pitch of holiness that they are made to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God having the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, that know the love of God that passeth knowledge, and surely these men must needs be the happiest men on the earth who are favorites of the King of Heaven.

10. But it is completely consistent with them when they are consumately blessed in the future world, for they being free finally and perfectly from all sin and distempers of soul have perfect holiness and are therefore called the spirits made perfect, who are

therefore blessed with a perfect vision of God's face, are perfectly like and assimilated to him, and consequently take up perfect satisfaction and contentment in the fruition of him. 1 Cor. II, 9. Brim full of immortal pleasure! Swimming in the ocean of endless and never fading pleasure. This is happiness. Thus holiness is the only way to true happiness.

I might instance in each act of obedience how it is rewarded with happiness as faith, hope, love, fear, etc. 1 Pet. 1, 8. 5 Rom, 2. 8 Prov. 17. 147 Ps. 11, etc., but I haste. And I may add that the very practice of virtue and holiness is that which is so agreeable to the nature of the soul and causeth such calmness and easiness of mind, yea also such contentment, that it may be said to be even a reward to itself as 'tis expressed in the 19 Ps. 11. But oh how unspeakable happiness is the glory which God has prepared for the reward of holiness in the future world of happiness. 2 Tim. 4, 8.

IV. But I am arrived at the fourth and last thing proposed, which was to improve this doctrine, and I shall do it

I. By way of information.

1. If holiness be the only way to happiness, we may thence infer that it is the highest wisdom that the rational creature can prove itself capable of to follow holiness. He that attends the means in the preference of his own interest may be denominated wise for himself. Hence this happiness being the ultimate blessedness and highest happiness and holiness being the direct means to attain that end it follows that the prosecution of the end by these means is the height of wisdom. For by how much more excellent the end and more noble the means, by so much greater the wisdom that is exercised in the pursuance thereof. This therefore must be great wisdom. Prov. XXVIII, 7. Job 22, 2. Deut. 32, 29. And we find that the wise are said to be happy in the other world. Dan. 12.

2. Infer that on the contrary tis the height of folly for the rational creature to neglect this duty. Folly lies in direct opposition to wisdom, they are then the worst of fools that neglect to use the true means to walk in the direct way to their happiness. We should count that man one of the worst of fools that throweth away a pearl. How much more he that throweth away his precious soul. Prov. 8, *ult.* Eccl. 9, 3. The Scripture calls such men fools a thousand times.

3. Infer the holiest men are the happiest men. They are called the excellent in the earth. They are and must be accounted both

the happiest men while they are in this world, however they may meet with vexation and trouble in the world, yet they are notwithstanding the most happy, inasmuch as their happiness does not derive from sensual but spiritual and eternal objects. Rom. 8, 18. From without indeed they may be afflicted, but within they are more abundantly comforted, their minds being calm and at ease. 2 Cor. 4, 17. But much more happy in the future world.

4. That the unholiest men are the most miserable. However they may flatter themselves with their sensual pleasure in their iniquity, yet it will be found a hateful thing. 36 Ps. 2. Their sin will prove as the gall of asps, it will bite like the serpent and sting like the adder. All their happiness will conclude in misery, whereas all the saints' misery concludes with happiness, for in the conclusion of their days of merriment and jollity, God shall send them to the confines of infernal darkness. There shall be weeping, etc. Rev. 3, 17. Isa. 57, *ult.*

5. The life of a saint is a rational life. For we have demonstrated holiness is the most rational way to happiness, being consistent with the principles of reason rectified and clearly illuminated. The saint all the while he is pursuing of happiness sees and knows what he does, whereas the sinner being immersed and infatuated with sensual delights, in them he walks down to the infernal pit and knows not where he is going. Eccl. II, 14. Prov. 9, 17, 18. The saint's happiness is all intellectual, whereas the sinner's is sensual. The saint therefore lives the life of a man, the sinner lives rather the life of a beast than a man. Ps. 49, 12. *ult.* He has no further reach with him than to gratify his senses, whereas the saint's whole aim and design is to satisfy the cravings of his intellectual immortal spirit. Phil. III. 17, 18, 19, 20.

II. Use: Reproof. Since holiness is the only way to true happiness it follows that those who live in a careless neglect of pursuing happiness in the way of holiness, are justly liable to be reproved; for hereby they judge that as a mean thing of no esteem and value, which is of all things the most amiable and lovely, namely, holiness, and not only so but they despise to consult the true welfare of their own precious and immortal souls, and in effect they hate their own souls, Prov. 8, *ult*, and prefer their sensual and finite before their intellectual and immortal spirits, therein simulateth the very beasts that perish. And is there any man of us that is willing to be called like a beast? O let any such be ashamed at such beastly dispositions,

and resolve that [he] will no more make the enticing alluring and flattering objects of the senses your gods, and make the Lord Jehovah your happiness. Rom. 8, 13. Gal. 5, 16, 19. Say that it hath sufficed you that you have fulfilled the lusts of your flesh and your sensual appetites, and that for the future you will make choice of a better object than sublunary things to center the rest and satisfaction of your souls with.

III. Use: Exhortation. Inasmuch as holiness is the only way to true happiness, it follows that all men who would be happy must be exhorted to live holily. You have seen it demonstrated how holiness leads to happiness. It therefore naturally concerns every one that would live a happy life in the world to come, must sincerely endeavor after holiness, and besides what was offered for the evidence of the doctrine I shall offer two or three things for motives.

1. Sincerely consider that without holiness no man can see the Lord, nay heaven itself would be an unhappiness to an unholy man. Tis sufficiently evident that holy duties are an uneasiness to an unsanctified man. What then would it be to him to be in heaven where there is nothing else? It is impossible for a man that is unsanctified to take satisfaction in him who is holiness itself and besides it is testified that such are without heaven. Rev. *ult.* 15. No unclean thing shall be allowed to reside in the celestial mansions.

2. Consider God is holy and dost thou, O sinner, who art an unholy creature, think to please and consequently enjoy and be happy in this holy God. How vain is such a pretense! How many times is it hatefulness and unholiness in the sight of God and dost thou think that God will be pleased with thee?

And for direction if any man would live a holy life in pursuance of happiness,

1. Endeavor to see the excellency and amiableness of holiness that tis a most lovely thing to be like God and a most delightful thing to have a good conscience.

2. The reasonableness of it, that there is nothing more agreeable to the dictates of rectified reason and therefore endeavor [to] practice according to such dictates.

3. The unreasonableness of unholiness, how that to be unholy renders a man beastly as seeking only the gratification of his senses.

4. Make it your business to tear down all inordinate notions and desires after sensual objects, endeavor to mortify all strong inclina-

tions to take any satisfaction in any thing here below and attend the apostle's rule of holiness given us. Col. III. 1, 2.

IV. Use: Comfort to all saints. Surely this doctrine administers unspeakable comfort to such in that it declares and evidences to them that their practice of holiness will terminate in unspeakable happiness. What though the world promise you no happiness? What though you are tossed, afflicted with many difficulties, corruptions, temptations, and afflictions, yet unspeakably happy are you if your hearts condemn you not, if you have but the inward peace and calmness and quietness which is the fruit of being conscious to yourselves of your integrity. If you have that peace which passeth understanding, having the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, you have that which the world could never give so you have that which the world can never take away. But more abundantly, ineffably, unspeakably happy shall you be in the future world, when as you shall perfectly see God, and be like him, so you shall take perfect satisfaction and contentment in him which shall never fade away, in heaven where you shall have an heaven full of immortal and everlasting joys as a reward of your holiness, forever to be possessed with, an ocean brim full of intellectual pleasure forever to be swallowed up in, where you have an endless eternity to spend in contemplating of and being satisfied with an infinite goodness. Oh heart ravishing happiness! To be satiated with such celestial delights! O ineffably happy, inconceivably blessed are the saints of God in the world of happiness being crowned with crowns of glory which fade not away.

Amen.

A Sermon upon the Reasonableness of Religion and Obedience

Sermon the VII.

Preached at East Guilford, May 5, and at Long Meadow, Springfield, May 12, 1716.

From that Word of the Lord, in the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, the XII chapter, and first verse. I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The glorious, omniparent and omniscient and omnipotent God who created, preserveth and governeth the universe of secondary beings, created man a rational being, capable of rational actions, reflecting on his own actions, understanding of truth, and choosing of goods, and as all the creatures were designed for the glory of their creator, so man was to glorify God in a rational manner, and was to act with consciousness when he served his maker, and what he did he was to do in liberty and deliberately — being capable of apprehending both the being and will of his Creator, and of conforming himself thereunto, and of taking satisfaction and delight therein. A glorious creature then was he in his primitive state of innocency and perfection and though having fallen and being immersed in sensuality, yet the service of God his Maker which was reasonable to him then ceases not to be in itself so now he is fallen; being not alterable. And those whose minds are illuminated and rectified are able even since the fall to both discover the reasonableness of and conform their conversation and practice unto the will of God. This great and holy Apostle Paul was one of those who having discovered the reasonableness of, conformed himself to and taken satisfaction in the service of God, does here (having in the former chapters opened and cleared the doctrines of Christ, justification and sanctification, and some account of the state of the derelicted Jews) exhort the Church of Rome (since the Jews are cut off from being the people of God and they are grafted in in their room) unto a sincere prac-

tice of religion and the reason why he thus exhorts them to it is because it is their reasonable service. But to make this more clear:

1. It is to be observed that the Apostle exhorts them to present their bodies a living sacrifice whereby (as I understand him) denoting both the external and internal of religion, for there is in man his outward and inward man which are both to be engaged in religion. The body is the outward man, the life the inward, or the life activity or engagedness of his soul in the practice of the duties of religion, for it is not enough that we come and present our bodies before God with a pretense of worshipping him, this I say is but to mock God, but our spirits or souls must be engaged in it. Prov. 25, 26. Jno. 4, 24. (the sacrifices of old)

2. Whereas the Apostle urges this sincere practice of both the external and internal of religion from that argument, namely, the reasonableness of it, tis as though he had said it is no other than what is highly reasonable, that is agreeable to the principles of a rational creature to devote itself up to the service of its maker. So that the whole may be taken up thus, namely, I beseech you of the Church of Rome, since the mercy of God is extended to you (and the poor Jews are forsaken) to devote yourselves soul and body, your outward and inward man, unto the practice of religion, unto the glory of your maker, the God that has thus distinguished you in his mercy, hereby shall you please him being holy and besides tis no more than what may rationally be expected and required of you. And not only so but what you might reasonably expect to yield, since you stand in such a relation to him. This I have thought to be the genuine interpretation of this text and the sum and substance of the doctrine here delivered and for an abridgment of it we may take it up in this point of

Doctrine: that Religion is Most Reasonable.

Religion is not a thing peculiar to those who have the revelation of it delivered unto them for it is a thing connatural with mankind to be religious. The immortal spirit of man will give him no rest (if it be but a little illuminated) until he has got some deity or other to center it on. Hence there is scarce a man and most surely no nation upon the face of the earth, but what has some deity or other which it worshippeth. For man being a rational creature if he does but a little exercise his reason he will from the contemplation of the works of God infer the being and raise some idea of a

deity, for the mind of man will be naturally hovering to and fro from one object to another until it light on some chief good or other which it may make the center of its rest. Though indeed sensuality has got the ascendant so much that many whole nations as well as particular persons form very formidable ideas of a deity. But the more cultivated and moralized nations had some of them arrived to many very regular and right notions of God and some of them which were very deep yet consistent with what God has revealed to us concerning himself and most certain it is that the works of God do argue out and evidence his being. For that which may be known of God is manifest. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world may be clearly seen from the things which are made even his eternal power and Godhead. So that as he dont leave men without a witness he leaves them wholly without excuse. And as surely as men know that there is a God so surely do they know that it is highly reasonable that they worship and obey him. But to set this doctrine in a clear light, I shall show: (I) What religion is. (II) What it is for service to be reasonable. (III) Demonstrate the truth of it. (IV) Improve it.

1. Then to show what religion is, I answer: religion is sometimes taken for the rule and sometimes for the practice of duty. But here both are understood for how can any practice be reasonable unless the rule directing of it be reasonable? And religion is a science or doctrine acknowledging the glorious and adorable being and perfections of a deity with a just sense of our duty flowing therefrom with a practice both external and internal conformable thereunto.

In this definition we have first the rule of religion, and religion as a rule propoundeth:

1. The being of God. That there is a God, the creator of the world, might at large be argued from the works of creation and providence. Can a rational mind raised out of the mire and dirt of sensuality behold this stately theatre of the universe and therein that vast variety of beings, the mysterious wisdom as well as amazing power displayed in the curiosity of the workmanship of them, the wonderful harmony and order of the creation and even the senseless beings seeming to aim at certain ends which they cannot be conscious to, all arguing and evincing a supreme governor, all conspiring to celebrate the praises of a maker and governor, I say, can a rational mind behold those things among many other

wonders, and not conclude surely there is an omniscient and omnipotent eternal mind who is conscious to all those things. It might also be argued from the universal concern of all nations in all ages of the world, as well as from the natural disposition of the rational mind, that is his conscience which every man assures himself will never be contented without a deity to lean and rest upon, and at least a conceit that it is in favor with. But above all we have this incontestable truth evidenced in the Sacred Scriptures, which are of incontestable authority as being the testimony of God himself concerning himself.

2. The perfections of God, for so sure as we aim at any right notion of God we must acknowledge that he is a most pure, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, wise, holy, just, true and good spirit, and even these attributes the more illuminated heathen had arrived to the acknowledgment of. But more abundant revelation has God made of himself to us in his word. Tim. 1, 17. Deut. XXXIII, 27. Exod. XXXIV, 5. and infinite others. But besides all the discoveries that the pagan world has made, the scriptures reveal (1 Jn. V, 7.) that there are three, etc. And that (Jn. 1, 12.) the Word was made flesh and suffered for the redemption of man, etc. Which the world without revelation would have been both vastly ignorant of and wretchedly miserable without, for Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

3. And consequently acknowledging the being and perfections of, it must acknowledge our duty to obey, thereby to glorify, as also happiness in enjoying of this God. Deut. VI. 4, 5, 6. For from the rational creature's acknowledging of the being and perfections of its maker necessarily and by direct consequence flows a conscience of duty. So long as I know not that there is a king I am not conscious of my duty to him but being acquainted that there is a king and the relation I stand in to him I must presently be conscious of duty to him. So soon as I am made to understand that there is an infinite, holy, just, true and good God, that made me, I must acknowledge that both my duty and my happiness consists in serving of him. Now this doctrine or rule of religion propounds what those duties are which the relation we stand in to him involves and engages us in, propounds vast and complete and ample and agreeable rewards to obedience, as well as punishment to disobedience, which are strong motives.

II. Which brings us to the second thing in the definition which

is religion considered as practice. For what availeth an acknowledgment of duty without practicing of it. To what purpose should I acknowledge a debt if I dont design to pay it. Now I might here, but I shan't spend time to, insist upon it. But I shall give a few descriptions. As

1. It must proceed from a good disposition of soul, from a soul illuminated to a discovery of the excellency of God and of religion and sincerely disposed and rectified to it, Mat. XII. 33. A good tree only brings good fruit. Thus religious practices must proceed from good principles.

2. They must be done in a right manner, that is conformed to the rules which God has revealed and rectified reason has discovered, for otherwise it is vain. Mat. 15, 9.

3. They must be done for right ends, namely God's glory for whatsoever we do (according to the Apostle 1 Cor. X. 31) we must do all to the glory of God. And then

4. According to our text and many other, both the outward and inward man must be engaged in the practice of religion.

II. But secondly I am to show what is meant by a thing's being reasonable. And it implies in it that it is agreeable or no ways repugnant at least unto the rational faculty of man. Man is endowed with rational powers. He is able to perceive, judge and determine what is true or false, right or wrong, as well as choose it when he has done. Now the thing that is reasonable offers no violence to any of these rational powers, but is agreeable to the dictates of them, which since these rational powers do perceive and judge and determine truth and falsehood, and in morality goodness or badness, must consequently if it be agreeable to them be true and good. "For we find that the mind takes abundant delight and satisfaction in the discovery of truth and performance of good, which evidences that they are agreeable to the nature of the soul and that what is contrary that is false or bad does offer violence to our rational powers." (Bishop Wilkins) A thing is therefore then said to be rational when it is agreeable and no ways repugnant to our natural reason, that determining of it to be true and good. Such our doctrine says religion is, which

III. I shall demonstrate and endeavor to evidence, and that in two things wherein it's conspicuous, proving

1. Religion is reasonable in itself though there never had been a reasonable creature, yet upon supposition that there should be

such a creature made, religion might be rationally demanded. But here we must understand the doctrine or rule of it. For religion as considered in itself is the will of God, or that duty which he requires of his rational creatures to perform toward him, and the will of God is only a transcript and representation of his own perfections, for us to imitate that in conformity thereunto we may be like him, which is consequently the dictates of the highest reason, even infinite reason, wherein there can be nothing irrational. Ps. XIX 7, 8, 9.

2. But religion is reasonable to us, that is, man's reason if rectified must acknowledge and will that religion is a reasonable thing and the practice of it may reasonably be demanded from him, as Rom. VII, 12.

1. Religion we have heard is the acknowledgment of a God and our duty to him, with a practice thereof. Of these we have heard at large, in particular whereto we will add, that as all men are bound for happiness and man's reason wont give him content without a deity (some or other) to be happy on, religion thus described, even true religion, is the only rational method to attain true happiness in, namely by a just acknowledging of God and our duty to him and practicing thereof making of us like him and pleasing to him.

2. 'Tis agreeable to reason that we acknowledge a God and the mind wont be satisfied without it. There are two things for this. One is that there is all the reason in the world for the being of a God, very clear in the argumentation from the effect to the cause. No man is ever counted irrational in arguing from the being of an effect to the being of the cause, thus, 'tis highly reasonable from the thing itself that we acknowledge the being of God. And then another thing is the mind of man is a rational being and must have something or other to be its center, to stay itself upon. Now we know that the mind if it be illuminated and not wholly immersed in sensuality wont take up satisfaction in irrational grounds, and consequently since it must have a deity to rest on, it is not an irrational thing to acknowledge him.

3. The more regular and true our ideas of God are the more satisfied the mind is, and more rational, and for the proof of this I may appeal to the experience of all those who are happily favored with acquaintance with God. They will doubtless concede that the more they have contemplated upon the glorious God and his adorable

perfections, and searched into the mysteries both of nature, providence and grace, (especially those of the latter) and traced the footsteps of divine wisdom, power and goodness, the more satisfaction they have obtained, and have found a peaceful acquiescence and contentedness of mind to be the result of such a search. And they have found that the more replete and furnished their minds have been of this knowledge, the better they have been enabled to solve all difficulties and untie all knots, and bring things to right.

4. The acknowledgement of a God and having right notions of him will rationally discover our duty to him. For the soul to be possessed with right apprehensions of God will have a wonderful influence to govern and guide it in its behavior before him. Here we will make a short induction, as particularly, the sovereignty of God and his all-sufficiency with other of his incommunicable attributes does naturally and rationally produce in the soul a submissive humble resignation unto and dependence on, affiance and confidence in God, and a sense and discovery of them make the soul at once willing to be nothing that God may be all. And a discovery and apprehension of the sovereigness and amiableness of God's perfections, how they all conspire to render him a being truly excellent, will inflame the soul with love to and zeal for God. And an awful apprehension of the majesty and greatness of God makes the soul fear him, and lie grovelling in the dust before him, and an apprehension of the wisdom, holiness, mercy, justice of God puts the soul upon a sense of the reasonableness of duty, and in conclusion upon a just discovery of the whole it is even changed into the very image of God and becomes like him. 2 Cor. III, 18.

5. And consequently knowing our duty toward him we are rationally obliged to do it and we act irrationally when we don't. The reason of the rational creature obliges him to a performance of that which he knows to be his duty, hence when a man knows that he don't do according to his knowledge, his conscience flies in his face, which is nothing else than his reason conscious to itself that he has not acted according to its dictates, even what he knows to be his duty bears testimony against him. Hence rewards are promised those that are religious, and punishments threatened to those that are not. Ps. XIX, 11. Luk. XII, 47. And in the day when God shall render to every man according to his works, he shall make that the rule of judgment. Rom. II. 7, 8. Tis manifest that in

not doing our duty when we know it, we act contrary to our reason in that we act contrary to our conscience, from all which we may conclude with the Prophet Ezekial XVIII, 25, the ways of the Lord are equal, and with the Psalm XIX, 7, the law of the Lord is pure right, and with our text and doctrine that religion is most reasonable service.

Now the IV. thing is:

Use I. Instruction.

1. Infer that irreligious men are unreasonable so far forth as they are irreligious, and consequently the beast has got the ascendant of the man, sense of reason. Well might the Psalmist express himself as he does in the 49 Ps. 12, *ult.* and the wise man, Eccl. 3, 18.

2. Infer that to be religious perfects our nature. Man in his perfect state had both a perfection of reason and religion and therefore the more he arrives toward perfection in them now the nigher he arrives toward that state.

3. Infer that religion offers no violence to us. It is nothing but what our reason if illuminated and rectified can well enough comport and consist with, and irreligion on the contrary does violence to reason. 1 Jn. 5, 3.

4. Infer that it is our duty to use our reason to the utmost in the practice of religion, otherwise all our religious practices will be performed only by rote and as the parrot speaks and knows not the sense of what he says. Religion without reason wont please God. Therefore

U. II. This doctrine exhorts us to be religious. And the consideration of the unreasonableness and brutishness of irreligion and the punishments threatened against it, together with the rewards promised to religion, may be motives.

1. Propound to yourselves that the only way to be like God and to please him is to be religious. Man was made to glorify and enjoy God, which he can never attain to but by serving of God and obeying his commands.

2. Study religion, endeavor to pray and search into the mysteries of religion and make farther discoveries, surely tis a pleasant study to a mind in good temper.

3. Especially endeavor to see the reasonableness of it, what a wonderful harmony there is in all its precepts and how just and righteous in all its injunctions. And then

4. With all join a serious practice of it, and then the conclusion is that both in this and in the future world, your peace shall be as a river, your righteousness as the waves of the sea, and your reward shall be glory, honor, and peace, even an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Amen.

A Sermon upon the Immortality of the Soul of Man

Sermon VIII.

Preached at North Haven, August 12, 1716. At Guilford, August 26, 1716.

From that word of the Most High God, delivered by the hand of Solomon, in Ecclesiastes the XII and 7, the latter part of the verse. And the spirit shall return to God that gave it.

God the thrice glorious creator, preserver and governor of the world, did create man a rational creature and that with such a principle within him which could never die, which immortal principle of his, being not composed of gross elementary matter as his body was, cannot therefore be resolved into any principles whatsoever. But since it is united for a time (since the fall) with a mortal body which resolves into its principles, being compounded of a variety of parts of matter, it follows that upon the dissolution of a man this his immortal spirit does indeed survive his body, and consequently must return to its maker. This is the doctrine the wisest of men and the greatest of kings does in the sentence now read to you, advance and propound unto us. It is a particle of that sermon which is called Ecclesiastes, by the Grecians εκκλεσιαστης, called by some Solomon's recantation or his penetential sermon, called by himself קחכת which signifies a preached or a preaching soul. 'Tis a sermon or impreachment on the *summum bonum* or chief good or highest happiness of mankind. The design of it is to demonstrate unto us the vanity of all created beings and their insufficiency to yield satisfaction to the soul of man, and through all the creatures to lead him unto the creator, the alone chief soul-satisfying good which alone is the soul's rest and satisfaction, which alone is the center of its contentment, and happiness. All which the wise man does (as he was of all men the most able) demonstrate evidently from his own experience, which is the best school mistress. In the prosecution of which design he does in the former part of the sermon demonstrate the truth of the first proposition which he had

laid down, *viz.*, vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. All this more largely insisted upon unto the VII chapter. And then he proceeds first more particularly to induce many things wherein the soul might find something to satisfy itself with and feast it upon, particularly insisting on wisdom in its several kinds and objects, considering of it both as pleasant and delightful for contemplation and excellent for the direction and guidance of us in our deportment and actions. And then in the last verse but one, sums it up in one general conclusion that the whole duty and happiness of man lies in fearing of God and keeping of his commandments. But in the wise man's insisting on particulars wherein the happiness of man consisted, he, having been in the former chapter speaking to young people, does here mention an eminent one in the first verse, namely, to remember our creator in the days of our youth, and indeed for young persons to remember God their maker and to love and fear and serve him is one of the greatest things wherein true happiness consists. And that the wise man might inforce this duty he tells them that old age and death and evil days must come on them.

And having insisted on old age in the former verses, he does in this verse insist on death, arguing thus. Death will come most certainly and we know not how soon and therefore it highly concerns us to remember our creator in life. And our text is only a paraphrase on death, or a description of it. Then (that is when a man dies) shall dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return to God that gave it. Intimating that whereas there are two principles of man, when he comes to die they are separated, the body returns to dust out of which it was taken, but what comes of the soul? Why, though the body dies yet the soul survives and lives yet. Why? Because it returns to God whence it came. It goes to him to be judged. It remains yet a perfect entire being conscious to itself and capable of giving account of itself to God. From the text then it is plain both that the soul of man was given him of God and that at death it survives the body and returns again. Hence I insist on this.

Doctrine: that the Soul of Man Is Immortal.

Or that at death when the body dies, the soul yet lives and survives it, and returns to God its maker. This doctrine is one of the

articles of the pagan faith, that which the heathen had discovered. They had learned so much of the noble and exalted nature of the soul from the wonderful and sublime actions thereof, such as reflection, intellection, and volition, that they were constrained to ascribe an higher original to it than matter and to acknowledge that it being uncompounded it must be indivisible and hence immortal. But even those which were not able this way to evidence it, yet for even unknown reasons were forced to acknowledge it, hence all nations whatsoever on the whole face of the earth, have acknowledged a future state of rewards and punishments, though indeed their conceptions were (some of them) very gross concerning it. But from the universality of this tenet it seems to be a natural disposition and inclination of the mind of man after immortality. Mankind has generally too high an esteem of itself as to think of itself that it dies like a beast. The mind is as it were conscious to itself of its immortal nature, insomuch that it can't endure the thoughts of mortality. Hence we have the general suffrage of all nations for the truth and evidence of this doctrine. And some of the more learned of them have discoursed at large on this head. "If," says one,* "with these our bodies our souls also whatever they be are dissolved, I cannot account them happy who having had no reward for virtue have even suffered for virtue itself." And we find another † discoursing thus: "the soul," says he, "is an invisible thing and is going to a place that is suitable to itself, that is noble, pure, and invisible, indeed to the good and wise God; where also my soul shall also go if he be good, etc." And so he goes on to tell who it belongs to, etc. φυχη ἡ αθανατη. The knowledge therefore of the immortality of the soul does not depend on revelation alone.

But to set it in a clearer light I shall show:

I. What I understand by the soul of man; and

II. What I understand by immortality; and

III. How it appears that it is so, by demonstration, and

IV. Improve it in sundry conclusions.

I. I am to show what I understand by the soul.

Ans. By the soul of man I mean his rational spirit, the principle of his rational actions. Some have thought that there are three

* Maximus Tyrius.

† Plato in Phaedo.

distinct souls in man, the vegetable, the sensitive, besides the rational, but I know no absurdity in thinking that all the vital, but especially sensitive actions owe their original to the rational soul. And I shall describe the soul (1) from its nature, and (2) from its actions, both intellective and elective. And (1) in discoursing on the nature of the soul you may take it up in these propositions:*

I. "I imagine that there is an universal spirit, dispersed throughout the whole mass of the world, actuating all and every part thereof, this is that which by some is called the form, and the late philosophers call motion, which is indeed the spring and fountain of motion. And according as there is a lesser or greater degree of this spirit in several sorts of beings, even so they have a greater or lesser degree of life and sense, the lesser have vegetables, the greater animals."

II. "That in the generation of man this spirit actuating of the matter, out of which he is made, does work it into a human shape and form, as all other natural beings are made in a natural manner after their various kinds."

III. "That at some certain time (we know not when) God does immediately infuse the power of consciousness into this spirit, from whence proceed all its humane and rational actions. And by God's statute and determination when this spirit is separated from the body, it becomes immortal."

1. As to the essence of the spirit of man, we know but a little about it, there is scarce any thing more known to us than that there is such a spirit within us and such as is the principle and original of our rational actions. Every man is conscious to himself that there is a thinking spirit within him; but there is nothing more unknown to us than the mind, as to the nature and essence of it. But

2. We may know from the sublime actions of it that it owes its original to something of a more noble nature than gross matter such as other things are made of, 'tis a contradiction to think that matter can be so wrought up as to be capable of reflecting upon and taking notice of its own actions; and of knowing anything of a deity and raising any conceptions of an infinite, eternal and unchangeable being, and of taking boundless satisfaction in him, as we know the soul of man is capable of.

* This is only a conjecture of the chemists. How much reason there is in it I do not now determine. It was not delivered.

3. It seems therefore to be of divine original, a ray darted from God himself and to be wholly above the sphere of matter and motion, and no ways confined to the laws of them. Our text seems to be of that mind, to which we may add the LXII Is. 6, and Ezech. XXXVII, 5. and Zech. XII, 1, and Heb. XII, 9. From which texts as well as from the reason of the thing itself, it seems evident that the spirit of man was immediately created by God. And however that objection of original sin might be made, yet it seems answerable thus: though the essence of the soul is made immediately by God, and as to the essence of it perfect, yet the original impurity thereof as it comes out of the hands of God is a just judgment. For when God creates the soul it comes out of his hands an essentially perfect being, and it is just in God to deny it original righteousness, so that it is naturally, *i. e.*, as to the nature of it, good, yet it is (and that justly) morally evil, being justly deprived of original righteousness, and original sin justly imputed to it.

4. Since the soul is above the sphere of matter and motion, we must conceive of it as being a most pure, fine, subtle, self-moving, self-knowing, or self-conscious substance, indeed all that we know it by is consciousness — which brings us to the second thing.

2. As to the actions of the soul, they are three, namely, reflection, intellection, and election.

1. As to reflection, thereby it is able to take notice of and reflect upon itself and its own actions. Hereby is a man chiefly distinguished from a beast, for though a beast can see and hear, yet he knows it not, and though he thinks, yet he knows it not, and takes no notice of his so doing. But the mind of man not only thinks, and knows, but it knows that it so does; it can in a moment mount from earth to heaven, and view the stars and poles of heaven, and clutch the whole globes with one intellectual grasp, and then turn to itself and consider where it has been and what objects it has had presented to its view, and what thoughts it has had thereof presented to its view, it can reflect upon itself reflecting, and know it knows. It can compare its actions with a rule and is conscious to itself of its declining therefrom.

2. By intellection it is able to perceive and judge and find out truth and falsehood; and reason and search into things beyond its knowledge. It is able to take a view of single ideas by themselves and to judge of the agreement or disagreement between them,

and to render a reason whereby to evidence the same to its satisfaction.

3. By election or volition it is able to choose and embrace what it judged and determined to be good, and to refuse and avoid what it had judged and determined to be evil. To love and hate, and fear and rejoice, and be angry, and the like. These are the actions and sublime powers of the soul, all which are exercised in knowing and remembering, but especially in that exercise of the mind called conscience, whereby it judges and determines of its own actions as to their morality, their goodness or badness, their conformity or disconformity, to the law of God, bearing testimony of them home. If a man's actions be good, conscience is at quiet, calm, and peaceable, and abundantly satisfied; but if bad, it immediately flies in his face and bears witness against him.

But besides these general actions there are some particular actions, which are above many others more peculiarly proper and appropriated to the soul of man as to be able to apprehend the being, and raise some suitable ideas of a deity, and of the duty and obedience it owes to him as its maker, and to raise therein boundless and insatiable desires after unseen and future objects and the enjoyment of this God, and also unspeakable and ineffable satisfaction in him. Thus for the doctrine of the soul.

II. I am to show what I mean by immortality. And I answer that by immortality I understand its being of such a nature as cannot be destroyed except by annihilation or of such a nature as can never die. Death is a dissolution of a thing or the returning of it into its first principles out of which it was made. Now the soul being not made out of matter as the body was, can not be resolved into it again, and therefore is said to be immortal, and consequently such as shall abide to the endless ages of eternity. For most sure it is, and that is it which this doctrine asserts, that every one of us, as well as all the world besides, must never cease to be, but must for ever continue to exist either in endless woe and misery or bliss and happiness, which to prove is the next thing before us.

III. I am to prove and demonstrate the truth of this doctrine, which I shall do by several arguments. From the nature of it, take it in these propositions.

1. The soul of man is a spiritual being. By a spiritual being I understand (as was said before) a most fine, pure and subtle sub-

stance such as is of a firm self union, and can penetrate dimensions or be at the same time in the same place that a body is in, as the soul is in the body. The essence of the soul is therefore resembled by the name breath, as Gen. II. 7. So Ezeck. XXXVI, 5. All which words sometimes signify breath and sometimes wind, being only metaphorical names.

2. A spiritual being is not made out of pre-existent principles. By pre-existent principles I mean matter out of which it was made. The sense of it then is that a spiritual being or substance was not made out of matter, which consists of parts or particles. Natural bodies are made of many parts of matter put together, which may be again dissolved, but it is not so with a spirit, that was not made of any sort of elementary matter, which existed before it, but was immediately created out of nothing. That is a Sadducean and atheistical principle to think that the soul was made out of matter, and besides the actions of it are such as are inconsistent therewith.

3. The soul being not made out of pre-existent principles or matter, cannot be resolved into them again. That which is ingenerable is incorruptible except it is made so by God's all powerful word, as the glorified bodies are, and contrary to this is as contradictious as to say that a being may be resolved into nothing. It is therefore an incorruptible being, hence also it cannot be divided into parts, but exert what power you will upon it, it still remains the same.

4. And its being of such a nature as cant be resolved into pre-existent principles is that which I call immortality, for its being unalterable supposeth its continuing a living being still, and that consequently it can not die — for death is a ceasing to live, and the soul being a living being, and not ceasing to be what it is, it therefore does not cease to live.

Therefore it necessarily and evidently follows that inasmuch as the soul of man is a spiritual being not made out of any pre-existent principles or matter, and consequently not resolvable into them, I say on these considerations it evidently follows that it is of an immortal nature.

2. From the universal consent of all nations. There is scarce a nation under the whole cope of heaven but what has acknowledged that there is a future state. Mankind is naturally prompt on to a belief of a future life. And though there are thousands in the world which are not able to give any reason wherefore they so

believe, unless it be mere tradition, which yet seems to be an insufficient argument to uphold it without some other reason through so many ages. But most true it is that mankind is not so stupid and senseless a thing as not to have a prospect of its future state. Though indeed many whole nations run away with many very gross and absurd notions about it. And indeed there are many of the more instructed nations that are very ignorant thereof. But as to the more barbarous we may a little see what absurd their notions are by the Indians, our predecessors in this land. But however gross our notions may be of it, yet there is scarce any one man, but who acknowledges it, except such who are become so wicked and are so far immersed and drowned in sensuality that they have even quenched or blown out those sparks of the light of nature as mankind is naturally endowed with.

3. From the Scriptures, where we have abundant testimony of the immortality of the soul. Accordingly we read of the spirits of just men made perfect in Heb. XII, 23, where we have the whole idea of the invisible world set before us. So our Savior tells the thief on the cross, This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Luke XXIII, 29. So we read of the souls of Lazarus and Dives, the one was carried into Abraham's bosom, the other to hell. These and many like places prove the separate state of the soul, to which we may add Christ's dispute with the Sadducees, Mat. 22, 32. And that the bodies of all that are dead shall arise and both body and soul shall live to all eternity, we have sufficient proof in the apostle's dispute in the XV of the 1 of Corinth. besides that in the XXVI of Is. 9, and Job XIX, 26. And that this future state shall be eternal is evident from the last sentence in the XXV Mat. *ult.* where we read of everlasting punishment and life eternal. So we also read how that life and immortality is brought to light through the Gospel. 2 Tim. I, 10.

From all which arguments it seems evident that at death the soul being stript and divested of its clods of mortality, it becomes only a naked spirit still surviving and ascends to appear before God.

IV. I come now to the last thing proposed unto the well acceptance of the doctrine. And I shall thence draw these several inferences.

Inf. 1. Since the soul is of an immortal nature, from thence we may draw this inference or conclusion, *viz.*, that the proper ob-

jects of our rational and immortal spirits are not [?] and sensual. This conclusion is very natural from our doctrine that since the soul is immortal and irresolvable the objects of it are such, for everything that is gratified must be gratified with something proper to it and agreeable to its nature, for there will be no gratification unless there be a suitableness between the faculty and the object, hence the soul being of an immortal and never dying nature must have immortal and never fading things for its proper objects. 'Tis therefore but a vain conceit to imagine that this immortal soul will ever be satisfied with any thing which this lower world can afford. No, the soul is of an higher birth than this world, and as it will not acknowledge this world for its parents so neither will it acknowledge any thing therein for its aliment and food. The things of the world are but tasteless, empty and insipid things to it. The soul is a thing of a vast capacity, so great after it is filled with all that is in this world, there is yet left a vacuity and emptiness; they are not big enough to fill it, and when it has enjoyed all there is yet something lacking, the great comprehensive space, the capacity of the soul is not yet satisfied. And why? Because that there is nothing in the creature that is agreeable to the nature of the soul. This material world is the proper object of the senses, and since there is agreeableness between them, there may derive satisfaction from it unto them; but here the case is not so. The soul upon a viewing and reviewing of all the excellencies of this sublunary world, will yet find a conscious emptiness. Thus therefore material and worldly objects are far from being the proper objects of the soul of man.

2. Inf. That the narrow finite fading objects of sense will never afford satisfaction to our immortal souls. This is not only a natural consequence of the doctrine but of the former inference, for 'tis most certain that what is not proper will not satisfy no more than water will serve for fuel to fire, and not only so but 'tis the consequence of all rational experience; we need appeal to none other than that experience of the wisest of men, S. in his recantation. What man was more advantaged than he to find it out if there had been any thing in the world have satisfied, for he took all the courses that were any way likely to satisfy, but finds none that would do his turn. And he gives us the result of all his experience, which amounts to this, *viz.*, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. He plainly saw upon the result of all that vanity was the motto and

inscription of all created beings. It therefore concerns us not to look for satisfaction in the world, for look while we will we shan't find it.

3. Inf. That spiritual and eternal unseen objects must be the delight of the spirit. Since our doctrine concludes what will not be agreeable and satisfy the soul it next concludes what will, and since the soul is of a spiritual, immaterial and immortal nature, it follows that such things only will be agreeable to and satisfy it. The reason why the objects of sense would not satisfy the soul is because they are but finite fading and gross nature, whereas the soul is of a nature directly contrary, for the soul being immortal and these mortal they would in time leave it destitute of any thing, and since we find no property in the creature agreeable to it, we must not think to find anything that will satisfy it till we find that which has that property of immortality. We shall therefore find ourselves miserably deceived in the conclusion if we thus flatter ourselves. And since there is nothing immortal under the sun, our safest way will be to take the counsel of our Blessed Savior, in Mat. VI, 19, 20, and of the blessed Apostle in Col. III, 1, 2. There we find something agreeable to our souls; there we are likely to find something that will satisfy, and that which can be found nowhere else.

4. Inf. That God and Christ are the alone objects of the soul's satisfaction. However the soul may find that in its fellow rational angels and blessed spirits, which may be desirable to it and agreeable, but yet it will never find it satisfactory without the favor of its Maker. The soul will not be satisfied (it is of so large a capacity) until it not only sees itself provided with a sufficiency for the present but also (having a prospect of its future never ceasing existence, and duration) of as complete a satisfaction coeval with its duration, hence therefore it must be an inexhausted fulness from which its satisfaction must be derived, which therefore is God alone, in whose presence there is fulness of joy and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Ps. XVI. *ult.* And since Christ is the only way whereby the favor of God can be procured, it is therefore God through Christ which is the object of the soul's satisfaction. So that the soul may say with the Apostle, Christ is all and in all.

5. Inf. And therefore that it concerns us above all things to get interested in the favor of God through Christ, and hereby a strong

and sufficient fortification against death when we are to be stript of mortality and become naked spirits. The time must come when we shall have full incontestable even experimental evidence of the immortality of our souls, and therefore it concerns us to secure that immortal state an happy one which cannot be secured happy to us but by the favor of God through Christ.

For Motive: 1. Consider that without the favor of God the soul can never be happy. For if it has not the favor of God it must have his frowns, and Sirs, you cannot conceive or imagine the misery contracted by being out of favor with God for our God is a consuming fire. Yea and he will frown those into the bottomless pit where there is endless misery. And can your hands be strong or your heart endure to think of, much less to bear, the dreadful vengeance of the wrath of a justly angry God? Who among you think you can endure everlasting fire? Who among you can endure eternal burnings. But this must be the portion of all those who are not interested in the favor of God. They are mistaken if they hope for anything else.

2. Consider that the favor of God is the greatest happiness that the soul can be possessed of. The favor of God is naturally the happiness of the soul, and it is a violation of the statute laws of a rational nature to be destitute of it, but more especially morally 'tis the reward of the soul, for the Psalmist tells (XVI Ps. *ult.*) In thy presence, etc. Sirs, if you are interested in the favor of God through Christ, there is nothing short of a heaven full of immortal and never fading joys reserved for such; and O the heart ravishing joys of heaven, they are beyond the ken of men to conceive. 1 Cor. II. 9. They are complete and full of satisfying, eternal and never ceasing, unchangeable and never altering, and who would not labor to the very utmost for them. Surely they are well worth striving and taking pains for, and cannot be had without God's favor.

3. Consider that the favor of God can no other way be procured but by Christ. For the Scripture assures us that he is the way, the truth and the life, and that none can come to the Father but by him. Jn. 14, 6. He calls himself the door. Jn. 10, 7. No name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. Acts IV, 12. He was from all eternity appointed by God the Father to be the mediator of the New Covenant, and to reconcile an offended God to offending men; for that end he died and suffered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. Rom. 4, 25. How vain

then are all attempts else. They all fall short of attaining that great end. And how vain is it for any to build upon the sandy foundation of their own righteousness.

4. Consider the great encouragements the Gospel lays before us to come to Christ. If we look on his person he is not mere man but God also, hence we may be sure of all-sufficiency. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And we have God's own word for it that he that believeth shall be saved, and on the contrary, he that believeth not is condemned already. Jn. 3, 15. And Christ himself tells us that whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out. Jn. 6, 35. What greater arguments of encouragement can he laid before you and if you would act the part of rational creatures you would embrace and weigh them, and tis your highest duty for life and death depends.

For Direction: 1. Endeavor to convince yourselves of the necessity of a Christ to procure God's favor. Sirs, you cannot with all the utmost of your own diligence, do what you can, procure the favor of God, for his favor can be no otherwise procured but by most exact conformity to his law which I presume none of us dare venture to assume to say we can do, for there is no man lives and sins not. 1 Kings 8, 46.

2. Endeavor to see your great need of a Christ. All men are by nature children of wrath and heirs of perdition. And God himself pronounced them cursed because they keep not his law. And whom God curses is cursed indeed; but since God appears in Christ merciful there is then hope. Now see we what great need we are in of Christ, for we cannot recover ourselves into God's favor, do what we can, and hence if ever we are recovered it must be by Christ, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved but Christ's. Acts IV. 12.

3. Endeavor to see the all-sufficiency of Christ and the safety of appearing in him. Here you may depend upon it, you may venture your souls on it you are safe. The way of being reconciled to God by Christ is a way which infinite wisdom was employed about the contrivance of, and therefore we have not the least ground to suspect the safety of it for God hath done all things well.

4. Endeavor to relinquish all confidence in yourselves. You have (if you consider on it) all the reason in the world to account your own righteousness to be very insufficient to obtain the favor of God, for says the prophet, All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

64 Is. 6. And hence if we depend on them, they will deceive us, we must therefore constantly maintain a mean opinion of our own doings, for since they wont procure God's favor to us it is highly reasonable that we should relinquish all confidence in them.

5. Endeavor in all humility to close with Christ upon Gospel terms. Sirs, the terms of the Gospel are to deny ourselves, and to go wholly out of ourselves depending wholly on the Lord Jesus Christ. O then let none of us have so good an opinion of himself as to have any dependence on his own doings, but let us cast ourselves at the feet of free mercy, and be willing that Christ should have all the glory of our salvation, saying with the blessed. Rev. 5, 12, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

6. Infer the mistakes of atheists. I would be far from imagining that any present are such, professedly and in opinion, though there are in the world some and it is to be feared many of that cursed race, who deny the Lord, their maker, and disown the being of their Creator, and fancy that there is no God, no heaven, no future state, they deny that their souls are of an immortal nature, and wretched and cursed men, nay devils, nay worse than devils, for they believe and tremble. They are the most bestial sort of men in the world, who extinguish the very light of nature, and give themselves up to all manner of vileness and sensuality. But however disbelieving they may be of these things, and however they may ridicule a God and a future state, yet the time will come when they shall have most awful evidence of it, they shall find themselves most woefully mistaken when God shall require their souls at their hands. Then shall the vizard that had blindfolded them fall off their faces, and they shall be called to defend their horrid opinion before him and from his bar shall they be dragged down into the infernal pit where they shall spend an eternity in the awful and dreadful and tremendous experience of the truth of what they have ridiculed as a brain-sick imagination.

7. Infer the mistakes of sensualists. Sensualists are imagining that they are the wisest of all men because they are improving their pleasure while they can have opportunity so to do, contemning future and eternal in comparison of their present good. Disbelieving that they have such precious immortal beings about them as ministers would have them believe they have, and are fancying as atheists do that that sort of thing which goes up and down

under the name of religion is only a trick of state contrived to keep men in awe without anything real in it. Or at least the most charitable thought we can entertain of them is that they are inconsiderate of God and their souls and the necessity of God's favor to make them happy. Poor souls, not considering that they have immortal natures in them, that can never be satisfied with the husks of this world. But they may be informed from this doctrine that (however they may fancy that their mountain stands strong and that they have good grounds to cry peace, peace, when there is no true peace) yet I say they will find themselves miserably deceived when their souls shall be stript naked and all that they have delighted and trusted in shall fail them. They will then find sensual things which they have delighted in a bed too short and a covering too narrow.

8. Infer the strong consolation of those that are in favor with God through Christ. Those that are reconciled to and in favor with God through Christ have had considerations to this purpose and you would all do well to consider seriously with yourselves, that I have an immortal and never dying spirit about me which will survive this body of clay, and that this my soul is by nature in a state of enmity to God and, in the hands of divine and severe justice, debauched and defiled with and inclined to thousands of enormities and irregularities and sins, whereby 'tis exposed to be the object and monument of justice and eternal misery, and that it is nothing but divine goodness patience and long-sufferance that has kept it from being the present object of the execution of the vengeance due unto it, hence he may justly conclude that I cannot be happy in this condition nor any other without the favor of God which in this condition I cannot possibly be the subject of, and that I cannot possibly recover the favor of God by any thing I can do. And since God has provided a Mediator, by whom reconciliation is made, and by whom there is all possible hopes the favor of God may be recovered and that under these considerations it becomes me to go out of myself and depend wholly upon the blood and merits of this Savior, ascribing all the glory of my salvation to him; and to conform myself most exactly unto all his commandments in an holy and obedient course of life. I say such considerations as these are becoming everyone and a practice of them a comfortable evidence of God's favor and reconciliation. Now this is all the fruit of considering that our souls are immortal. Now con-

sider how happy a condition a soul in this frame is got into. (1) In this world the constant recollection of the thoughts of being in favor with God and the peace of a good conscience, oh how sweet! will be a perpetual comfort and consolation. And (2) at the hour of death when leaving this sensible world this soul can with comfort and joy look death in the face and bid it welcome and with an heroic magnanimity quiet and trample upon this present world and ascend to those blessed regions not being ashamed nor afraid to look God and Christ his Judge in the face, whose reward shall be an eternal heaven full of all possible joy and bliss, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart, which the Lord of his infinite mercy bring us all to the happy possession of, and the enjoyment of himself in.

To whom be rendered as is most due, all might, majesty, dominion, thanksgiving, and praise, both now and forever, Amen.

(Preached at Branford, September 3, 1716.)

Notes for a Sermon on the Image of God in Man

Sermon XXV.

Preached at West Haven, March 16, 1718. On Genesis, I Chapter, 27 verse.

So God Made Man in His Own Image.

When Almighty God had finished the creation of the rest of our world, reduced the disordered chaos from its unformed and confused state into a more settled and regular order, the elements being settled in their natural places, the air purified and the surface of the globe laid open to the benign influences of the sun and stars, and adorned it with the grateful verdures of the vast variety of plants of every kind, and replenished it with the mighty tribes of animals, and in a word when he had made all things ready for the entertainment of so noble a creature, then he introduced man as the masterpiece of them all to be the lord of the whole visible creation and we are in our text taught this doctrine, that man was originally made after the image of God himself. My design at present is to explain the image of God expressed in mankind, and to improve the same. And the whole of my doctrinal discourses will consist in resolving this one question, *viz.*,

Q. Wherein this image of God consists, or wherein man in his perfect state of innocency resembled God his Creator.

A. I dont intend to consider the external resemblances of him in the government of this lower creation wherein divines place part of the image of God. But what I design is to reflect on those moral perfections wherein man resembled God Almighty. And

1. Neg. We dont nor mayn't imagine that man resembles God in any of his incommunicable perfections, such as immensity, eternity, and immutability. These are the peculiar, and distinguishing characters of Almighty God.

2. Pos. But to express it in a few words, I conceive that the image of God in man or that wherein man resembled God his

maker, was a perfect and constant agreement between the wisest and best dictates and judgments of his understanding and the choice, election and approbation of his will, so that he could and did always choose and freely and without reluctancy approve and practice according to what his best wisdom and prudence had determined to be best for him. And this which I have now set down is the spring, original and life of all moral virtues and perfections. So that this image of God consists in two things: (1) a perfect knowledge, and (2) in a free choice of what was truly best and most eligible. Col. 3, 10. Eph. 4, 24. For these are the noble, bright and amiable virtues and perfections of God himself who doeth all things according to his counsel.

But I shall endeavor further to exemplify this matter in sundry particulars.

1. God loves himself, who is the best and most amiable of beings, and in this man resembled him, that God was his chief good, for then he knew, chose, and loved God above all things.

2. God loves his creatures and therefore in this man resembled him, and especially the rational part of the creation, wherein most of the image of God appeared. 1 Jn. 4, 16. Eph. 5, 12.

3. God is a just and righteous God, and in that man resembled him who was disposed to the exercises of universal justice and equity. 1 Jn. 2, *ult.*

4. Man resembled God in a propensity to be good and kind and gracious and merciful according as there should be objects for the exercise of these and such like virtues. Mat. 5, 45.

So that in fine man was then a most perfect and happy creature and disposed to universal goodness, holy as God was holy, pure as God was pure, and perfect as our heavenly Father was perfect, and so we are commanded to be by our blessed Savior, Mat. 5, *ult.*

Use 1. We hence learn how great was the excellency and happiness of human nature. Like to God himself and subjects of his favor, whereas there was the most ardent and engaged love mutually between God and man and nothing can be more perfect and more happy than mutual likeness and love.

2. We hence also are taught what a sorrowful and amazing catastrophe the fall of our first parents hath brought on mankind, for Eccl. 7, *ult.* Lam. 5, 16. Rom. 5.

3. Hence also since we are fallen we may remark the great need we stood in of the mediation of Jesus Christ to restore us from

the filth and guilt of sin into a state of holiness, purity and favor with God. And hence what obligations we are under to the love of God and Jesus Christ for undertaking this for us. 1 Jn. 4, 19.

4. Since we were once such perfect and happy creatures, and have lost that blessed state, and since Christ has come to put us under a possibility and hopes of recovery again, it concerns us to do what in us lies to endeavor again to recover ourselves to that blessed state. Isaiah 46, 8.

1. Consid. That tis a most noble thing to be like God, whom can we better resemble?

2. Tis to be like Christ, angels and saints to be like God for they bear the image of God.

3. Our likeness to God is our highest perfection and happiness. Whereas the contrary

4. To be destitute of the image of God is to be like the devil and his infernal slaves.

5. Yea such persons sink down to the nature of the beasts themselves. 49 Ps. *ult.*

6. As to be like God is our perfection and happiness, so to be unlike him is our greatest misery.

Endeavor then to be like God

1. By imitating his virtues and perfections. Eph. 5, 1.

2. By imitating Jesus Christ. Rom. 13, 14. Jn. 13, 15.

3. By endeavoring to govern yourselves by his laws and commandments, etc. Thus will you be like God and will be made meet for his heavenly kingdom. To whom be glory forever, Amen.

Notes for a Sermon on Who Have a Right to Eternal Glory

Sermon XXVI.

Preached at West Haven, April 13, 1718. On Revelation XXII, 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.

It is the business of this latter part of the Revelation to give us an account of the future happy and blessed state of the Church. But whether it related to this or the eternal world the learned disagree. There are many arguments for the first, *viz.*, that there shall be yet a glorious state of the Church in this world. Whichsoever it is, it's equal for my purposes, for certainly none shall be interested in the glories of the glorious state of the Church in this world if that be a millenium, but they that have a right to eternal glory.

By the tree of life I understand the blessings of Christ's glorious kingdom in general, and that is what is to be understood by this city. The sum of the text may be expressed in this

Prop. That those that do the commandments of our Lord have a right to the blessings of his Kingdom.

By the Kingdom of Christ I understand the glorious and happy state of his Church whether in this world or that to come, but chiefly the latter which will be the result of the former. The happiness whereof will consist in the eternal vision and fruition of God and Christ. My business will be here to show: (I) What commands of Christ I here intend. (II) How the truth thereof appears. (III) To improve the doctrine.

I. I am to show you what commands of Christ are intended. I answer, all the commands of Christ are here supposed to be obeyed by those who have any right to everlasting life. But there are two sorts of commandments: *viz.*,

1. The natural law or the commands of natural religion which

are the voice of the God of nature, and Christ has made a new edition of them. Such are:

1. The duties we owe to God. Love, etc.
2. The duties we owe our neighbor. Love, justice, etc.
3. Those we owe to ourselves. Prud. Temp. etc.

2. The Gospel commands peculiarly so. As
   1. Faith. Such a persuasion of the truth of the Gospel as makes us obedient to it.
   2. Repentance of all our sins and reformation.
   3. Circumspection and endeavors after a new life.
   4. Steady dependence on Christ for salvation.

These are the general heads of the commands of Christ which we must yield ourselves up to the obediences of if we would hope for everlasting life, and that (1) universally, (2) constantly, (3) sincerely.

It is very observable that the promises of life are made very often to faith, which there is great danger of misunderstanding. We are therefore to assure ourselves from this text that nothing else but an actual performance of God's commands will suffice, and yet our entire dependence must also be on Christ for acceptance with God notwithstanding.

II. I am to show how this truth appears, *viz.*, how doing the commands of Christ gives us a right to the blessings of his kingdom and two ways it is:

1. It is the practice of the commands of our Savior that qualifies for the enjoyment of his Kingdom, as the practice of them is duty, so tis interest. The practice of these duties subdues our depraved natures and rectifies them, predisposes us to by pre-engaging us in the exercises of the heavenly state. So that what we have been accustomed to in this world we shall with pleasure and delight enter upon when we leave it.

2. God has been graciously pleased for Christ's sake to make promises of these future glories to our observance of the commands of religion. So that the observance of them entitles us to them by virtue of the promises of God. So besides the express word of the text we are taught. 2 Pet. 1, 5. etc. Rom. 6, 22.

III. I am to improve this doctrine.

1. For an argument to stir up persons to take pains with themselves to bring themselves to a compliance with the obedience of the commands of Christ if they would secure a right to the blessings of

Christ's eternal kingdom. Will you be content to lose heaven and everlasting bliss for want of taking pains?

2. For an argument to support good men in their difficulties and temptations in this world. If you are good men you are such as do the commands of Christ, and if so you have a right, etc. by our text and what greater encouragement can there be?

3. To inform us what our province is, *viz.*, not to be solicitously inquisitive about the deep things of God and his hidden counsels, which we have no concern with, but to do his will revealed, which if we do we may humbly assure ourselves from our text that we shall be safe. Deut. 29, 29.

4. To quicken us all in the way of our duty, being assured that if we have our fruit unto holiness, the end shall be everlasting life.

A SERMON:

Of the Separate State of the Soul, and the Comfort of Good Men in Death

Easter, 1726

Preached at Stratford on Good Friday, 1726, and at Newport on Rhode Island Ap. 24, 1726; at Boston, May 8, 1726, for Dr. Cutler; at Brook Haven on Long Island, June 26, 1726; at West Chester, and New York, Fort, and Church, Oct., 1726.

From Ps. XXXI. v. 5. Into thy hands I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

As Death has been the common fate of all mankind derived upon them by the apostacy of our first parents; so there has nothing more exercised the thoughts of the more considerate and thinking sort of men in all ages, than to devise a probable account how this misfortune came to befall the human race, and the most effectual means to fortify themselves against the terror of a dissolution, and to reconcile themselves with calmness and tranquility of mind to submit to it. The contemplation of the nature and powers and faculties of our souls and that innate desire and thirst after immortality which every man feels in his own breast, together with the difficulty of reconciling the present state of things with the administration of a wise and good God, were always reflections sufficiently obvious to excite the curiosity of mankind upon this momentous subject; and to incline them to conclude that we were not made to die like beasts. That it could never be the original design of so wise a being as He must needs be that made us, to raise so noble a creature into being only to act a short and transient part upon this miserable stage and then pass off and be no more. That therefore death could not be natural to human nature, however it came to pass that so great a disaster befell it. It looked very hard and strange that so great a misfortune should attend upon so noble a creature; but it must seem worse to think that it should

make a full end of him. Nature always had an aversion against death as a thing unnatural: but then there was always something discovered itself in the inward sense and feeling of human nature that created in them a yet stronger aversion against the thoughts of an utter extinction of being. And consequently it was always natural to men to conclude upon an hereafter, some state of existence or other beyond the grave.

It were endless but to reckon up all the variety of hypotheses or opinions and conjectures that have obtained among the several ages and nations of the world, whether fabulous and poetical or serious and philosophical, relating to the subject of our present meditation. It is only sufficient to observe that the general notions that have prevailed among the unthinking herd of the heathen world have always been very wild and extravagant, both as to the original of evil, and the future state. And indeed that the best and soberest conclusions of their wisest and most thinking men have been but very dark and conjectural. While men were left to grope in obscurity upon these subjects, it was but a very little way that they could find sure footing: but very blind discoveries that they could make of immortality, and but very feeble supports that they could muster up to bear up their minds against the prospect of an approaching dissolution.

Those only who have been so happy as to be under the instructions of a supernatural and divine revelation, have been able to think consistently upon this subject and to form to themselves expectations worthy of God and the dignity of our nature. And tho' all ages of the Church of God have had considerable instructions concerning a future state of immortality; yet they were attended with so much obscurity, especially about the future immortality of the body in the resurrection state, that it might be truly allowed to be the prerogative of our Master Christ Jesus, to have brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.

But tho' the clear discovery especially to the Gentiles of this future state of immortality was reserved to be the glory of the Gospel Dispensation; yet it appears from sundry passages of the Old Testament that both the separate existence of the soul, and likewise the future resurrection of the body were always the faith and consolation of good men not only after but before the Law.

Under the Law we find many very express testimonies to this purpose. Solomon in his Ecclesiastes 12, 7, speaking of old age

and death said, Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit to God that gave it. Than which words nothing can be plainer both to intimate to us the two essentially different principles of which human nature consists, and the equally different tendency and subsistence of them upon our dissolution. That as certainly as our bodies are made out of this gross sublunary matter, so certain are our souls of a different original, and in a peculiar manner given us of God, who in other texts of Scripture is styled the father and former of the spirit of man within him, and which therefore is in some peculiar and supernatural manner derived from him. And accordingly that as certainly as our bodies return to their mother earth from whence the materials of them were taken, so certain do our souls thereupon still continue to subsist and return to their maker, former and father, even God, from whom they received their being. And this doctrine of the preacher is agreeable to and seems to be plainly insinuated by the account which Moses gives us of the first creation of mankind, who tells us that, as the body received its original from the dust of the earth, so the soul owed its being to a higher and more noble original, even the immediate inspiration of the Almighty. God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, which seems to import such a living as is likewise an immortal principle. 2 Gen. 7. And in allusion to this account of the original and nature of our souls it seems to be that Job, who was before the Law and at least as old as Moses, expresseth himself after that manner in Ch. 27. 3.: While my breath is in me, and the spirit or breath of God is in my nostrils, meaning his soul inspired by God. After the same manner says Elihu, c. 33. 4, The spirit or breath of God made me, the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. Such a principle did these ancients esteem the soul to be as deriving from God immediately and partaking of his immortality, and accordingly they express themselves full of hopes and expectations of a life and subsistence beyond the grave.

The testimonies likewise from those former and distant ages are no less express concerning their hopes of a resurrection. Nothing can be more so than the declaration made to the prophet Daniel, Ch. 12. 2, That the multitudes which sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And Christ is represented in that prophetical song in the 26 of Isaiah as speaking to the same purpose. v. 19. Thy dead men

shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Other intimations might be given, tho' plainer could not be desired, of this faith of God's ancient people under the Law. But as it is not anywhere expressly revealed in the Law of Moses; so it seems to owe its original to some ancienter revelation made by God to the patriachs, perhaps from the very beginning; for we can trace it higher than the Law, and find it to be the belief of good men, even of those who were out of the line of God's peculiar people, from whom it does not appear that Job was derived. And yet we find a very express testimony of his faith in this particular. 19 ch. 25, 26, 27. For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and tho' after my skin worms destroy this body yet in my flesh I shall see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another. Which words seem plainly expressive of Job's faith in the resurrection, tho' some considerable writers have interpreted them as having an eye at his restoration to prosperity after the grievous adversity he then labored under. But certainly they can't be so restrained without offering violence to them and departing from the most plain and obvious sense of the words.* For if we suppose him to have had the resurrection in his eye, we can scarcely devise plainer expressions to describe it withal than he here uses: and the pomp and solemnity with which he introduceth them seem very naturally to lead us to this sense of them.

This doctrine of the separate existence of the soul and the resurrection of the body is likewise what our B. Savior teaches us to understand by that declaration of God to Moses. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, for that He is not the God of the dead but of the living. 22 Mat. 32. They were then therefore actually alive in a separate state and had an undoubted prospect of having their bodies restored to them again, because God here declares himself their God, which he could not be, in the full sense of that promise, unless he should entirely recover them from under the curse of the Fall and make them heirs of all the New Covenant blessings and sons of the resurrection. If he

* v. Dr. Th. Sherlock's Dissertation about the Fall at the end of his discourses on the prophesies.

would be their God, it could not be imagined that he would suffer death forever to feed upon them.*

Seeing then a future state of happiness both in soul and body seems so evidently to have been the faith and hope of good men both in and out of the line of God's covenant people, as well before as under the Law, and that we can so plainly trace it up to these ancient times, wherein it seems to have taken so deep a root; we may justly conclude that this tradition was at least as old as the translation of Enoch, and indeed that it was at first undoubtedly made to our first parents immediately after the Fall to comfort them under the sad prospect of that death and misery which their rebellion had brought upon their posterity, being truly implied in the victory promised to the seed of the woman over the serpent.

What I have said will, I hope, at least be sufficient to satisfy us, that this future state of happiness to good men was the faith of the ancient Jewish Church; and what grounds the holy Psalmist in my text had to comfort himself under his calamity and dangers and fear of death with the hope of being happy in a better state.

It appears from the complaints which the Psalm is full of, that David was in some sore distress, or in view of some imminent danger when he composed it. He seems almost to be lost to all hopes from this world, and thereupon to draw all his comfort from the expectations of another life.

He was in this as in many other instances a type of Christ. And accordingly our Blessed Savior, and after his example, St. Stephen, use this same expression, for their last words upon giving up the ghost. For thus speaks our blessed Lord, Luk 23. 46. Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit. And this application of it by Christ to himself upon this occasion is sufficient to justify us in interpreting the Psalmist in this sense. That as our Savior had a prospect of the separate state of his soul upon his dissolution, and commends it into the hands of his Father; so David must be interpreted to have the same faith and the same view.

Here then we have a plain evidence, both that our souls survive our bodies, and that this has been the belief even from the most ancient times. And that therefore those who disbelieve it are guilty of a most wicked piece of infidel heretical singularity. Indeed to think that death casts us into a profound sleep, or a state of utter

* *v.* Dr. Whitby *in Loc.*

insensibility or makes a full end of us, is a notion that debases human nature, and lays it in a level with the beasts that perish. A notion so mean and dishonorable of rational creatures that I should be apt to disbelieve it, and entertain the views of immortality, out of respect to our noble natures and powers even tho' I had no sufficient grounds for such a belief. So that if the belief of a future state be an error, it is however a pleasing mistake as Tully represents it,* and what we should be easily apt to fall into even from a principle of self-love.

But indeed this is not an imaginary notion, but an important and substantial reality, founded not only upon plain and express revelation from God; but likewise upon the solid conclusions of reason, for nothing can be more reasonable than to conclude from the powers of thinking, consciousness, liberty and choice, that our souls are of a higher original than gross matter with which they are utterly inconsistent, and from which they can never be derived, for if matter be ever so much altered or curiously modified it will remain stupid, dull and senseless matter still, and can never acquire a power of moving and exerting itself. And if the soul be not made or compounded of matter it is not capable of dissolution, and must therefore be naturally immortal.

With very good reason then did the holy Psalmist with his wise son Solomon, believe that when his body should return to the dust as it was, his spirit would return to God that gave it. A certain subsistence therefore there is, of the soul after the dissolution of the body, tho' there is nothing more difficult than to form a notion of the condition it is in, or the manner of its being and acting. It is certain that it can carry away nothing with it besides its rational powers and its virtues and vices, in the exertions of which it must be happy or miserable. Happy in the free and clear exercise of reason and perfection of virtue, or miserable in everlasting darkness and despair and an habitual propensity and bent to wickedness and vice.

And accordingly it must be imagined and believed that God Almighty has provided somewhere two distant places for the reception of souls: the one for the assembly of those that are holy and happy, where they may uninterruptedly enjoy God and one another's society, and make all those improvements in knowledge and

* Tull. *de Senectute.*

virtue, which will advance them to a ripeness and fitness for that more happy state that awaits them after the resurrection of their bodies. The other for the assembly of those that are sinful and miserable, where they shall be confined in darkness and horror, in fearful expectations of the judgment of the Great Day, which after the resurrection shall assign them to the everlasting sufferance of consummate misery.

This therefore, as it should be our greatest concern while we live, so it will be our greatest happiness and comfort when we come to die, to be delivered from the fears of this exquisite and endless misery, and to be full of the hopes of that happy and glorious immortality. Now the way to this, is, to spend our whole lives, without reserve in the true and faithful service of God, in all the duties of sobriety, piety, righteousness and charity. Then we may with a lively faith in the blood and merits of Christ our dear Redeemer, commit the keeping of our soul to God in well-doing, as into the hands of a faithful Creator. 1 Pet. 4. *ult.*

The Apostle you see puts in that necessary caution in well-doing, for otherwise it is the most daring presumption to recommend our souls to God, when we come to die, after a life spent in unrepented, unreformed rebellion and disobedience. However so earnestly we may then cry Lord, Lord, we shall gain no other answer than that, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. And it is impossible to conceive of a more miserable creature, than such an one, who all his lifetime persevered in the service of sin, that hated to be reformed and cast God's words behind his back: who would not be prevailed upon to lay aside the weapons of his rebellion, but hardened his heart against all the means and motives used to reclaim him: I say than such an one upon the brink of eternity suing for mercy without any hopes of obtaining it, and at last forced to resign up his wretched soul into the hands of an incensed God who is a consuming fire, whose abused patience and long-suffering, will now turn into implacable fury and vengeance, which will immediately doom him to everlasting burnings. Because God called and he refused, God stretched forth his hand and no man regarded, therefore will he now laugh at his calamity and mock when his fear cometh. Prov. 1.

On the contrary how comfortable, how happy and glorious is his death, who has spent his life in well-doing? A life of self-

denial and mortification, of patience and watchfulness, of faith and prayer, of humility and resignation to God's will, of righteousness and charity, in a word, of perseverance in universal holiness and virtue. A conscience void of offense towards God and towards man. This, this is that which when we come to die, will enable us cheerfully to look death in the face, to defy even the King of Terrors, and to resign up our spirits into the hands of God our Heavenly Father, with hopes full of immortality. If like holy David, we have thus been men after God's own heart, we may with him be able to say with humble boldness, Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me O Lord, thou God of Truth.

And where else can we go but unto Thee, good God? Thou hast the words of eternal life. With whom can we more securely repose our souls? In whose hands can they be safer, than in his, who is the father of spirits, the unchangeable chief good of immortal creatures, infinite wisdom, unsearchable power, and unlimited goodness, a rock of ages, the eternal father of mercies with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning? Who, we may be persuaded, will safely keep what we have committed unto him. To whom therefore our souls may with confidence repair as the center of their rest.

When therefore we feel our spirits about to depart from these earthly tabernacles, we cannot have more comfortable and supporting considerations to feed upon than those contained in these words of the Psalmist, *viz.*, the redeeming mercy, the power and the truth and faithfulness of God, and never can we need such supports more than at such a juncture.

First, this was the first encouragement to him to commend his spirit with faith and confidence into the hands of God, because he had already redeemed it. And a glorious and all-sufficient price is paid by the Son of God for the redemption of our souls. This is the foundation of a good man's faith when he comes to die. He knows that the Blessed Jesus was so kind as to bear in his stead, on the cross, that wrath of God which was due to him, when He made his soul an offering for sin, and became a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Whereby He purchased pardon and favor with God for all those whose dependence is entirely on Him. In whose blood their sins are blotted out, their debts cancelled, and their peace secured. In Him therefore, and in the virtue of his

merits the good man knows he shall appear safe before that God with whom he has to do, to whom he is now going.

Especially since he has a good hope that he hath as well been redeemed from the power of his sins by his grace, as from the guilt of them by his blood, and that he is as well sanctified by his spirit as justified by his merits. For the same death of Christ which purchased pardon for all true penitents did likewise procure the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit to enable them to repent and bring forth all those holy fruits meet for repentances, and necessary to qualify them for that pardon; which therefore it must be supposed the good man is conscious of when he comes to die.

And it yet further adds to his comfort and satisfaction in the tho'ts of his dissolution, that his body is by Christ as well redeemed from the power of death, as his soul from the power and guilt of sin. And therefore, that tho' it is necessary that it be dissolved a little while, that it may sweeten in the grave; yet, since Christ is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept, it is therefore impossible that death should prevail upon him, or that the grave should hold him long. Because He lives we shall live also. Since He is risen we shall certainly arise also, for He is our head, we his members, and our life is hid with Christ in God. This makes the good man to defy death with that triumphant song, O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! This takes away all the terror of a dissolution, that Christ, our glorious conqueror, has gone before us thro' death and the grave to life and glory. Whom we are sure to follow thither, if we faithfully follow him here in this life.

But that which confirms the good man's faith in the resurrection, and of his security in the hands of God, is, in the next place, his power, which is the meaning of the word in the original which is the name of God. With whom all things are possible. In whose hands we are therefore safe, and nothing can molest us, or wrest us from him. He is therefore able to keep our souls secure, committed into his hands from the power of evil spirits in their separation, and to revive our bodies again and restore them to our souls so that the gates of hell and power of death shall not prevail against us. Look unto me and be ye saved (says He) all the ends of the earth, for I am God and not man.

And then lastly to complete all, He is a God of truth, and therefore all his great and precious promises are to be depended upon,

which he has given us for our support in a dying hour. For he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent. We know whom we have believed, and have all reason in the world to be persuaded that he will not fail us. From his immutability and his oath, we have strong consolation, to flee for a refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, which is as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering in to that which is within the vail, whither Christ our fore-runner is already entered for us.

Thus you see what mighty consolations the Gospel provides, and these words contain wherewith to support ourselves against the tho'ts of our dissolution. Glorious hopes these![1] Let us resolve to take the comfort of them when we come to die, by so numbering our days as that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. That wisdom which is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and without partiality or hypocrisy. In a word that heavenly wisdom which will make us wise unto salvation, consisting in the faithful and persevering exercise of all heavenly virtues. Then shall we be able with confidence and unspeakable comfort to commend our spirits into the hands of God, our mighty Redeemer and the God of Truth, who will present us faultless at last, before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To whom, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be all honor, and glory for evermore.

Amen.

What follows was added at the Funeral of my dear deceased Friend Mr. Henry Caner, Sen'r, at New Haven, Sept. 24, 1731, who departed the 23. *Aet. suae* 60 or 61.

And with little variation on Sunday, Jan. 17, 1741/2. after the funeral of my dear friend, Mr. Elijah Nichols, who died on the 10th. *Aet.* 36.

Such were the hopes and consolations of our dear deceased friend whose remains here lie before us, who after a truly Christian and virtuous life spent in this world, is now entered into peace and joy, and could say with the Psalmist in my text, Father into

[1] The three pages added for the funeral service were to be inserted at this place, and the remainder of the sermon as it first stood omitted. [The Editors.]

thy hands I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.

You all here present are his witnesses how holily, how blamelessly, how devoutly, how uprightly, how peaceably and how humbly he had his conversation among you; so that I may appeal to you how impossible it is to do justice to his memory and character without running over the whole system of moral virtues and Christian graces, for which he was conspicuously exemplary, so as to attract the love, esteem, delight, and even admiration of all that conversed with him.

His strictness and integrity of life, his sanctity of manners, were truly to be admired, his meekness and humility, his temperance and sobriety, his openness and sincerity deserve to be mentioned with a particular accent. His piety and devotion towards God was unaffected and without noise and show, but it was truly sincere and ardent, and ever attended with calmness and tranquillity, cheerfulness and joy and an holy and heavenly temper. He delighted in nothing so much as in the exercises of religion, and had a most quick relish of the holy delights to be enjoyed in God's house and ordinances, in attending on which how attentive, how devout and serious, and how solicitous to profit and make himself wiser and better!

Towards men how kind and benevolent, how tender-hearted and friendly, how modest and peaceable, how candid and affable, yet how pleasant facetious and conversible? In his dealings, how just and exact, to his word how punctual and faithful, and in all his professions how cordial and hearty? In a word, he was one of the best of friends, one of the kindest of husbands, one of the tenderest of fathers, one of the faithfullest of masters, one of the best of neighbors, and in short in every respect, he was one of the best of Christians! (pub. spirit forwardness to every good work)

Thus he lived as one would wish to live: and died as one would wish to die, of all that knew him greatly beloved and greatly lamented. But as great as our loss is so great is his gain! So much heavenly virtue and holiness, so dear to God, could not fail of the embraces of his Heavenly Father, and all the joys and glories that are prepared for the faithful in a better world?

Let us, therefore, comfort ourselves with the good assurance of his happiness, and not repine at God's dispensations, but let us

imitate his virtues and graces, and learn like him that wisdom from above, to be pure and peaceable, gentle, etc. And whatsoever we have seen him do to go and do likewise, and be ready as he was to go when God shall call: that while he is gone to his God and his Savior, to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, we may as he did, work out our salvation with fear and trembling, that at length we may again meet with this our departed friend, in that happy state where there is no more death neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain nor sickness, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, where we shall live to die no more, and meet to part no more forever, but join with him and all our other friends that are gone before us in company with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, with prophets and apostles, with martyrs and confessors, and all the company of the faithful in admiring, loving and adoring God our Heavenly Father, and Christ our merciful Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost our gracious Sanctifier and Comforter. To which three sacred and adorable Persons, one eternal God, the glorious majesty of heaven and earth, be ascribed all honor and glory, dominion and power world without end.

Amen.

[Postscript on the back of the title page, with additional dates of preaching.

We have lately, my brethren, been contemplating the glorious victory which our Lord has gotten over death and the grave by his death and resurrection, whereby he has opened the gates of eternal life to all believers. These meditations naturally excite our curiosity upon the subject of the future separate and resurrection state, for which reason it will not be disagreeable to you, I presume, to be entertained upon that subject.

Easter, 1739 — Stratford, May 15, 1747. With some alterations in the delivery at the funeral of my friend, Mr. A. Birdsey. Sunday after Easter, Stratford, 1767. Mrs. Shelton's funeral, April 2, 1746.

The Necessity of Revealed Religion

A Sermon on Prov., XXIX, 18.

Where There Is No Vision the People Perish

Preached at Stratford, Sept. 27, 1727. S. T. and at New London, June 9, 1730. Ap. 28. at St. 1765; at Stratford, Nov. 23, 1740. ib. p. t. Feb. 4, 1743/4. ib. Aug. 3, 1746. Ps. 89, 15. p. t. Oct. 1, 1749.

These words seem to me to represent to us the melancholy and wretched condition those people are in, who are destitute of supernatural and divine revelation of the mind and will of God. For the word חזה in the original which is here rendered vision generally signifies those discoveries God was wont to make of Himself and of his mind and will to his prophets to be communicated to his people, who for that reason are sometimes called חזים seers, because the method which God many times took to discover his will to them, was either by a visible representation of some sensible object to their outward senses or by a strong impression of it upon their imagination either sleeping or waking, so that it seemed to be seen by them.

So that a vision signifies something seen or supernaturally represented or made known by God to the prophet or seer, whereby his mind and will was discovered to him and by him to the people, who in some of the versions is rendered an interpreter, because he explained the sense and meaning of the vision.

And the word פרע in the original here rendered, perish, signifies, and in other versions is rendered to be broken, to be scattered, and to be drawn away. So that the meaning of the text seems to be, that the people that are destitute of any vision, or supernatural divine revelation, that is, that are not taught and instructed by God himself, what they are to know and believe concerning Him, and in what manner they are to worship and serve Him so as to please Him and gain his acceptance, are in a wretched, broken, scattered, wandering, and therefore perishing condition, because they are

liable to be diverted and drawn away from their chief good, from the true object of worship to dumb idols, and from the right method of serving God, to superstition and folly.

What therefore I aim at in discoursing on these words, is, to discover the necessity mankind are under of having a supernatural and divine revelation and discovery made to them, of what they ought to know and believe concerning the God that made them, and of the right method of worshipping and serving Him, whereby they may please Him and gain His acceptance. And thence to argue the reasonableness of believing that such a revelation and discovery is made to mankind, and that the Christian religion is such, and that therefore we have abundant reason to be thankful for it and to form our belief and behavior according to it.

And for the better methodizing of our meditations upon this subject, it may be observed in the first place, that the light of nature has always discovered that there is a God, that is, a glorious infinitely wise and powerful being, and that not only mankind, but all other beings are entirely dependent upon Him. The frame of the world, and the regularity, order and harmony of all the appearances in it, have always brought the whole race of mankind to this conclusion, so that there has scarce ever been found a society or community of men so far sunk below reason into sottishness and brutishness as to make any question of it. Some have indeed tried to dispute themselves out of it; but such have ever been esteemed by the more sober, considerate, wise and thinking men, such as the standard of human nature is to be judged of by, to be a sort of monstrous appearances in the moral world.

And indeed it is scarce possible to imagine how a man can seriously contemplate the grandeur and magnificence of the world, the nature and texture of the several kinds of beings in it, their mutual relation to, and dependency one upon another and their universal joint tendency for the beauty order and advantage of the whole, without being convinced of the presence and agency of an almighty and most wise superintending mind, and that all things are ultimately dependent there upon for being, subsistence, and continuance in order. And how can we consider man as he is a thinking rational and therefore accountable as well as dependent being, without conceiving of him as being in a more particular manner related to God?

And if it be granted that mankind are thus dependent on God, and that being rational they are therefore accountable to Him, and for that reason in a special manner related to Him, as being not only his creatures and therefore his property and possession, but also reasonable and therefore his subjects and servants; this will in the next place infer upon them an obligation to worship and serve Him, and to endeavor thereby to please Him as their maker, sovereign, lord, and benefactor. For the reason He has given them qualifies and enables them for this, and can it be tho't that He could make them with such exquisite wisdom, without designing them for an end? Or that he should make them capable and fit for a particular end, without designing that end in making them? Especially when the end they seem to be made for, and are evidently capable of, is in itself most wise and reasonable, as acknowledging and obeying a maker and benefactor most certainly is?

And can a rational creature, conscious of his own existence and sensible from whom he derived his being, and all his enjoyments, every thing needful and convenient for his happiness and well-being, can he fail of feeling within himself a disposition and tendency to gratitude and obedience to that being to whom he finds himself standing thus related? Will not his reason necessarily conclude him inviolably held under such an obligation? Certainly he that concludes contrary to this, concludes against the common sense and feeling of mankind, among whom gratitude and duty to a benefactor was always held a necessary obligation upon all reasonable beings, flowing from the nature and reason of things, and the necessary respects and relations they bear one to another as being what they are.

And indeed mankind have been ever generally sensible of this obligation, tho' they have greatly run into errors and mistakes about the nature of God and the manner wherein they ought to serve Him. There has scarce ever been found a nation so stupid but they have had some notion of a Deity, and some way or other of worshipping and serving Him. Their errors and superstitions have indeed been very various, but their acknowledgment of this obligation to worship and service has been universal; which plainly shows that this is one of the first and most obvious deductions of reason and the light of nature.

And as they have confessed this obligation, so they have been

generally sensible of some defect and disorder universally and hereditarily spreading itself among them. As reason has always in some measure suggested to them what they should be, so experience has convinced them of their falling greatly short of the dignity of their nature. They have shown, as St. Paul says, the work of the law written on their hearts, their consciences also accusing or excusing. They have discerned something suitable, pleasant and agreeable to the rational nature in virtuous actions, and some thing disagreeable and troublesome in, and felt a sort of violence done to the inward sense of their minds by such as are vicious. And as vicious actions have always gone with a disagreeable gust and left a sort of sting behind them, and they have been sensible of something unworthy of human nature in them; so they have been convinced of their being exposed to the displeasure of the Deity on the account of them, and vice has always made the actors of it mean spirited, timorous and fearful of vengeance; from whence have come to pass so many devices and contrivances for atonement and expiation, such a great variety of methods to appease the offended Deity; and hence probably it is, that sacrifices have so generally obtained among mankind.

But after all the light of nature will be found extremely insufficient to instruct us in the knowledge of God and the right method of worshipping and serving Him, and what course we must take to please Him and gain his acceptance. This is what my text mainly requires me to insist upon, and therefore I shall endeavor from sundry considerations to make it appear, that those people are truly in a wretched, deporable and perishing condition that are destitute of divine revelation, considering how insufficient the mere light of nature is, to instruct us how we should worship and serve God so as to obtain his favor and acceptance.

To evidence which it may be considered, that it is impossible to worship and serve God aright and to his acceptance without a true understanding of the divine nature. Men will never have any notion of worshipping God in spirit and in truth unless they understand that God is a spirit. On the other hand it is plain that all that variety of superstition and folly which has prevailed in the world, has still been proportioned to the various gross, senseless, stupid notions men have entertained of God.

Now whatever attainments in the true knowledge of God, any particular persons have advanced to, by the mere light of nature,

who have been extraordinary geniuses and had singular leisure and advantages for such speculations; yet it is certain that the generality of men have entertained but the darkest and grossest apprehensions of the Deity. So that the improvements of the natural light could never extend very far in the reforming mankind, and begetting among them true apprehensions of God. And therefore a divine and supernatural revelation, if such could be had, would certainly be the most compendious and expeditious method of bringing mankind in general to a just sense of God.

But if we duly consider the general state and condition of men, it will appear to be morally impossible for them to arrive at any tolerable right apprehensions of the divine nature, without supernatural revelation, and it will not at all be wondered at, that they have generally been overwhelmed with so much ignorance, and superstition, nor can it remain any question, but that such a revelation was absolutely necessary to beget a sense of God and religion among mankind.

For in the first place all men for several years after their first coming into the world are trained up under the government of sense and passion, their acquaintance is only with the objects of sense, and they are not capable of relishing anything else, and the gratification of their bodily appetites is all they aim at, and the chief good they have in view. It is a long while before their reason is capable of being exerted to such a degree as to excite in them the least curiosity after the abstracted objects of the understanding, such as religion relates to and when they come to any degree of this, their best apprehensions of these things are but very weak, and little more than dreams of the imagination, that can have no strong influence upon them, especially unless they are blessed with a more than ordinary advantageous education.

In the meantime their bodily appetites, and relish of the objects of sense are very strong, and daily gaining ground, by which they are prepossessed with sensual habits, whereby their minds are habitually sensualized, and weakened, and their attention called off from sublimer speculations, and their tho'ts, if any they have, of the objects of religion, are but shattered broken and interrupted. And this habit they have contracted of thinking only or chiefly of sensible things, must of course create in them an aversion to the tho'ts of those sublimer and abstracted objects. And besides, sensuality naturally produces softness and effeminacy and aversion to

labor, especially to the laborious exercises of the mind, whereas it is a work of a great deal of labor and requires taking a great deal of pains for the mind, especially unassisted by revelation, to present to itself the spiritual abstracted objects of religion, so as to reason upon them, and seriously consider them, to any purpose for our improvement either in knowledge or virtue.

This is the universal condition of mankind, that they have an habitual prepossession against religion. How little effect then can the light of nature be imagined to have towards the promoting in them just apprehensions of God and a sense of religion. But then besides, it is to be granted further, that the reason of mankind at best is but a very dark and obscure light. It is but a very little way we can see into the nature of things with the best helps and advantages and with the greatest application and industry. And it is not one in a thousand that has a genius and leisure for any laborious inquiries. What then can be expected from the common rate of mankind? If those of the best abilities and under the best advantages, do but wander in the dark when they have got but a little way in their contemplations, what a poor progress must the generality of men be imagined to make in these things? It is much if ever they have force of mind enough to put them at all upon thinking on things of this nature, and if it did how soon would they find themselves got beyond their depths? And so liable as we find we are, to mistakes, so easy to be imposed upon by false appearances, and so apt to be led into error, how little is such a treacherous thing as our reason is, to be trusted in thinking upon such abstracted subjects? How much need then have we of an infallible guide and supernatural instruction to let us into a right understanding of God and our selves, and of what we are to believe and do in order to please Him?

And then in the next place, if we were better qualified than we find we are, yet how many thousand amusements and diversions do we find about us to take off our thoughts from the contemplation of God and religion. The objects of sense and incentives to pleasure and diversion are many and various and continually surrounding us, and mightily taking with us, and pressing upon us, so that it is almost impossible for us to resist their solicitations, so as to raise our minds above them, or keep our selves out of their power, that we might have leisure to attend to the more noble and rational pleasure of contemplation. How then can any progress in the knowl-

edge of God and our duty be expected without supernatural instruction?

But then if we lay aside the pleasures and diversions, even the necessary and unavoidable businesses and employments by which we procure our subsistence would prove a sufficient hindrance from the study of divine things. Supposing indeed a divine revelation of the will of God to mankind, the attainment of a competency of knowledge of God and our duty, may be conceived to be well enough consistent with the necessary affairs and business of life. But without that, it can't be imagined but that mankind, amidst the manifold unavoidable affairs and hurries of life, must sink into the grossest ignorance of God, and religion. For God in his providence has so ordered the state of things in this world, that the necessities and conveniences of life cannot be provided for, without a steady and constant application to some sort of business or other, to which the minds of men can't but be so habituated, and engaged, that it can't be expected that they should have inclination and leisure for such an attendance to the business of religion, as would enable them to make any tolerable improvement in things of that abstracted nature, when men of the greatest abilities and leisure, which are but very few, have made but a very poor progress.

And then lastly it has always been believed even by the heathen world, and we are fully informed of it by revelation, that there are a vast number of malevolent spirits, who are themselves rebels to God and out of spite against Him are continually insinuating themselves into the hearts of mankind, and soliciting them to join with themselves in this rebellion, and drawing them away from the knowledge and worship of the true God. These are the prince of the power of the air and his legions who work in the hearts of the children of disobedience. And at the coming of our Savior we are told that the whole world lay ἐν τῷ κονηρῷ under the dominion of the Evil One, and that for this end the Son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the Devil. To turn mankind from the power of Satan unto God, and to translate them out of the the kindom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son.

And in fact the Devil had so far drawn mankind away from God, as by his instigation idolatry was universally practiced, and under idolatry he had procured himself and his angels to be every

where worshipped instead of the true God, and so far were their foolish hearts darkened that the true God who made the world, was scarcely known in any degree among men: and instead of the pure worship due to him, the most impure abominable and senseless rites and superstitions were universally practiced.

This I say was in fact the condition of mankind and if such powerful and malignant spirits, had such an ascendant upon them, and usurped such a dominion over them, no wonder they were carried to so vast a distance from the true knowledge and worship of God, and sunk into so great and wretched a degeneracy, and how great a necessity must this their miserable situation, argue of a supernatural revelation and instruction for their relief and recovery.

From all which considerations, the original sensuality of mankind, the strength of their lusts and the weakness of their reason, the multiplicity of their diversions and variety and pressing necessity of their business and affairs, together with the ascendancy and influence of malevolent spirits; it abundantly appears what great necessity there was of a divine revelation and supernatural instruction to inform mankind in the knowledge of God and the right method of serving and pleasing Him: and therefore that where there is no vision, no such divine revelation of the mind and will of God, the people are in a wretched broken wandering and perishing condition, and objects of the greatest pity and compassion.

And can it be imagined that God would leave them in these miserable circumstances to perish for lack of vision, when He could easily communicate to them such a measure of knowledge and assistance as would be sufficient for their recovery? Does not the very light of nature teach us the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works? Is it possible to conceive of God as a being of infinite perfection, without acknowledging Him to be a being of infinite goodness, and kindness? And has He not given abundant demonstration of this even in all the works of nature, in all the provision he has made for our subsistence and comfort, in giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, replenishing our hearts with food and gladness?

Seeing then he hath thus poured out his goodness upon all his works, and made such kind and plentiful provision for the necessities and conveniences of our lives, for the support of our bodies, and for the gratification of every one of our senses and appetites

can it be thought that he would take no care of our souls, and make no provision for them? When he has provided for us as animals, would he have no care or kindness for us as men? And after He hath provided for our subsistence ease and pleasure during the short time of our continuance here, would He have no regard, and make no provision for us, for a better state, which is to last forever hereafter? Is his kindness all confined to our mortal bodies, and has He none for our immortal souls? He openeth his hand and satisfieth the desires of every living thing giving to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry to him, answering all their necessities, and is it reasonable to think He would not have as great a regard for the much nobler race of men, the most excellent of all the works of his hands in this lower world, and who are in a peculiar manner his own offspring, as being made after his own image? On the other hand, methinks, we have all imaginable reason to conclude that he has a particular kindness and tenderness for them, and be sure to make all necessary provision for their minds as well as their bodies, for their nobler part, wherein they most resemble Him. For it seems reasonable to think that God would most delight in beholding his rational creatures resemble Himself; but unless they are provided with sufficient instruction, from knowledge and virtue, wherein his image properly consists, they must fall into the depth of ignorance and vice.

And God knows men cannot be happy without knowing and serving Him. He knows they are then happiest when they are most like Himself, when they live most conformable to the reason he has given them. And that they can never do this unless they are instructed by Himself, unless their understandings are informed and their wills inclined to his service, to that method of living which is most pleasing and acceptable to himself. He knows that as knowledge and virtue are the perfection and happiness of the reasonable nature, so ignorance and vice are its utmost degeneracy and misery: that ignorance exposes them to vice, and that vice necessarily in the nature of the thing, involves them in all kinds of trouble and perplexity.

And can it be imagined that God can behold his creatures, his own offspring, the works of his own hands, whom he can't but have a kindness and tenderness for, and pity as a father pities his children, can he see them wandering after the foolish imaginations of their own hearts, and for want of instruction and assistance

precipitating themselves into misery and perdition, and not lend them a little help for instruction, relief and recovery? When he could easily communicate such instructions and assistances as would put them into a capacity for happiness? Is it not much more reasonable to believe that He would pity them in their low estate, whose mercy endures forever, and teach them to know and serve himself so as they might be conformed to him and please him, and be happy in his favor and friendship?

Nothing can be therefore more reasonable than to believe that he has in fact revealed himself to mankind, that he has somewhere made such discoveries of himself and their duty as may be sufficient to recover them out of that darkness and ignorance in which they are naturally involved, and to lead them to such apprehensions and practices as would perfect their natures and render them happy both in this world and forever. And that those who have not been so happy as to have the advantages of such instructions shall be favorably dealt with, and all allowances made that can consist with reason and equity, and that He whose tender mercies are over all his works, will rather incline to mercy than severity.

I say considering what has been offered, it seems most reasonable to believe that God has somewhere, in some method or other, made known his mind and will to mankind: and lastly, I think it must be allowed by any one that has carefully examined the matter, that the Christian religion has infinitely the best pretenses of being a divine and supernatural revelation of the mind and will of God, of any religion in the world.

For if we consider the Christian religion, (which we have not now time to do) as to the excellent rules of morality which it prescribes for the conduct of our lives in every relation wherein we stand to God, our neighbor, and our selves; as to the plainness and simplicity and excellent tendency of its rites and institutions; as to the nobleness and weight, and the great instructiveness and usefulness of its doctrines, and all these doctrines and laws, as most consonant and agreeable to and tending to the utmost perfection and happiness of the reasonable nature and powers: together with the external evidences of it, its correspondence to ancient prophesies; the exemplary and unspotted sanctity and integrity of its Author; the simplicity and perseverance even unto death of its first teachers; the variety and greatness of the miracles they wrought for the confirmation of it, and lastly the manner and

mighty progress of its propagation in the world: I say if we consider the Christian religion in all these respects, and compare it with all other religions that have appeared in the world, it will be found to have vastly and beyond all comparison the advantage of them all, whose laws prescribe or at least indulge immorality; or whose doctrines are either foolish or repugnant to the light of nature or of vicious tendency: or whose rites and institutions are barbarous, or at least silly and superstitious, and which in the whole are beneath the dignity of human nature, and vastly unanswerable to the demands and necessities of it.

Upon the whole, seeing we are blessed with such a discovery of the mind and will of God, and are so plainly taught how to worship and serve Him, and by what means we may please Him and gain his favor and acceptance, how ought we to be filled with the most ardent love and gratitude to him, and how happy ought we to esteem ourselves? (Ps. 89. 15) Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound. they shall walk O Lord in the light of Thy counteance! Blessed are the people who are in such a case, yea happy are the people who have Jehovah for their God!

But then how much ought we to pity and pray for those multitudes who are in a miserable and perishing condition for lack of vision having no knowledge of the true God and are led captive by Satan at his will, to serve dumb idols, and to the practice of all kinds of superstition and folly, who being strangers to the covenant of promise are without hope and without God in the world. These I say are objects of the greatest compassion, and it would be a noble charity to endeavor their recovery and what we ought to be ready and glad of an opportunity to do, if God puts it into our hands. At least let us always pray with the utmost zeal and earnestness that God's ways may be made known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations, and beware of every thing that may tend to prejudice the heathen against Christianity and especially of bringing a scandal upon our holy religion by our wicked lives. On the contrary let our light so shine before men that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

And lastly as we enjoy the greatest advantages of knowing God and our duty, so he expects that we bring forth fruit in proportion to them. For since we know the will of God, if we do not do it we must expect to be beaten with many stripes, while those who knew

it not, and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few. The talent committed to us is very great, and we must expect to give a strict account of it, what manner of persons ought we then to be in all manner of holy conversation. It were better to perish without vision, than under it. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for us. Rather therefore than run the hazard of so bitter a reckoning let us resolve with the utmost industry to conform ourselves to the most holy instructions God has given us, and then we shall not fail of being secure of his favor and acceptance here, and of his everlasting friendship in the life to come.

Which God our Heavenly Father of his infinite mercy grant for the sake of his dear Son, to whom together with the Holy Spirit, Three Persons and one God, be all honor and glory for evermore.

Amen.

Sept. 7, 1727.

The Foundation of Our Faith in Christ

A sermon preached on Easter afternoon, at Stratford, April 18, 1731. From St. John VI, 45. [Text in Greek.]

St. Ap. 21, 1745. fr. v. 44. No man can come unto me except the Father that hath sent me draw him.

P. t. May 1, 1748. it. fr. v. 44. Ap. 19, 1752. Feb. 1, 1767.

N. B. I would not have anything here said of the light of nature understood to exclude that divine teaching which man had from the beginning of his existence and without which he would have learned little or nothing from nature.

Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

In this chapter we have our B. Savior entering into a long course of reasoning with the Jews in assertion of his heavenly mission and doctrine; particularly Christ had asserted in the 41 verse that He came down from Heaven. At this they took great offense, and said is not this the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith I came down from Heaven? Upon this occasion of their persisting in unbelief, after all the arguments he had used, and miracles he had wrought for their conviction, he reproves their murmuring and obstinacy, in that it appeared that it was not want of evidence for the truth of his mission and doctrine, but want of affection to the discoveries he made of the mind and will of God to them, for want of a due attention to the force of the evidences laid before them, and especially for want of a teachable and obedient temper.

Hereupon he observes to them that, as he expressed it in v. 29, it is the work of God that they be induced to believe in him whom God hath sent, by the evidence God gave by the light of reason of his own veracity and benevolence to his creatures, and of the utter impossibility that he should ever do or permit any thing that should necessarily impose upon them; by the evidence God gave in the

ancient prophesies fulfilled, and in the miracles which were wrought in attestation to the mission and doctrine of Christ; and by the intrinsic excellence of that doctrine itself as being worthy of God to teach, and of men to receive and obey, and lastly by God's secret influence on our hearts disposing us highly to prize and value that eternal life offered and insured to us thereby. I say, that it is God's work to induce and prevail upon us to believe in his Son, and as it is expressed in my context, to draw us by these means to Christ: for no man, says he, can come to me, *i. e.*, believe in and embrace me as his Savior, except the Father draw him: which drawing of the Father can't mean (except in some extraordinary and miraculous cases) any thing that necessitates us to come, for this would be contrary to the reasonable and self-determining nature he has given us, for him to force us to come to Christ, by any irresistible operation on our minds; it would spoil all the virtue of our coming and be inconsistent with the very being of that state of probation wherein we are placed, and in short, in every respect inconsistent with the nature of things, and imply in it the greatest absurdities imaginable.

The drawing therefore here spoken of must ordinarily mean such as is suited to reasonable natures, and free agents, to whom it is peculiar to be drawn by persuasion, by the force of arguments and motives, such as those above mentioned, joined with so much (and no more) influences and assistance in fixing our attention, and raising our affections and strengthening our resolutions, as is consistent with our natural freedom, and still supposes in our natures a power of determining our selves to embrace the offers that are made, and to practice the duties enjoined, so as these actions may be properly ours, and not God's, tho' all the glory of them be due to him, without whom confessedly, we could do nothing.

The drawing therefore here meant, is, by the evidences both from the light of reason, and miracles, and the motives and assistances, wherewith God prevails upon us to believe and embrace his Son Jesus Christ as our only Savior and Redeemer: and those are the things that we are here in my text said to hear and learn of the Father. And upon having heard and learnt of him we are said to come unto Christ. So that it shall be my business at this time, first more particularly to explain what is meant by coming unto Christ, and secondly what it is that we hear and learn of the Father, that should induce us to come to Him.

First, I will explain more particularly what is meant here by coming to Christ. And as to this, I observe in the first place, that it is indeed scarce possible for us to speak of the actions and exertions of the mind, without metaphors or similitudes drawn from what we observe among sensible things. Thus the word reflect, properly signifies to bend back, as a spring that is stretched but returns to its former situation and retires into itself, from whence it is translated to signify that action of the mind, whereby it retires into itself and makes itself its object, and takes notice of its own exertions and operations: and the same might be observed of many other words that are used about things of this nature. This I say is what is common and even necessary by reason of the deficiency of speech, and because the first notices of our minds are from sensible and external things from which we therefore borrow words, wherewith to express our sentiments when we come to take notice and speak of what passes within us.

But it is to be observed further that it was more especially the custom of the eastern nations to abound in metaphors, similitudes and parabolical expressions in explaining the great and important subjects of religion and morality. In conformity to which our B. Savior delighted to make use of a great variety of parables and metaphorical expressions in explaining the great doctrines and precepts that he came to deliver to mankind. Thus (not to go out of my text for other instances, which every where abound), he here represents God the Father as one teacher and master, and himself as another. And the Father as having given some previous instructions, introductory to his own, and such as having a tendency and design to prepare his disciples to receive what he was to teach them.

Accordingly, as the external action of any one's coming to a master or teacher to receive instruction, implies a confidence in the teacher that his instructions were to be depended upon so he uses this word *coming to him*, to express that confidence and dependence which it becomes a disciple to have in him whom he betakes himself to as his master, in order to receive instruction from him.

What therefore he means in this text, is, that whosoever has been under the instruction of God, the primary master teacher and instructor, the great creator and lord of all, and attended to his instructions, and received whatsoever God had made known both in his works, and in the revelations and discoveries in his word, in the

law and prophets which had before been written, in the love of them, and with a meek, teachable and obedient mind; and now, with the like temper attended to the miracles God wrought in attestation to his doctrine and mission; I say, that whosoever had before this heard and learned of the Father, as his first master and teacher would now repair to himself as a secondary master. and as a teacher come from God, to communicate some further instruction from him, above and beyond what he had been pleased to communicate more immediately by himself, in the former dispensations, of the light of nature and the Mosaic Law, which were more properly the dispensations of the Father, as the Gospel was to be more properly and peculiarly the dispensation of the Son; and would accordingly now attend to his own instructions with an entire confidence in Him; that whatsoever He should command was necessary to be done in order to our salvation and happiness.

So that the design of these words is to intimate the entire connection there is between the light of nature, Judaism and Christianity, the former as the dispensation of the Father, and the latter as the dispensation of the Son, and to show that a due attendance to the former, with a proper temper of mind, such as they had a tendency and design to beget in us, would not fail to prevail upon us to embrace the latter and be sincerely obedient to it.

So that to come unto Christ, is to come to him as a teacher come from God, and consequently to receive him as such, to believe all his doctrines to be most certain and important truths, and all his laws to be stamped with the authority of God, to believe Him to be the Great Mediator between God and us thro' whom alone we can expect to obtain favor and acceptance with God, and consequently to have our whole dependence upon Him as such, and in order thereunto, to devote ourselves to follow his instructions and obey his laws, and make use of the means He hath appointed in order to qualify us therefor; all this is implied in believing in Christ, which is what is meant by coming unto Him, which phrases are evidently used to signify the same thing in the 35 verse, where our Savior assures us, that whosoever cometh to Him shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Him shall never thirst.

Let us therefore, secondly, consider more particularly, what it is the Father has done and does do to draw us to Christ, *i. e.*, to prevail upon us to come unto Him and believe in Him, and what it is

we are to hear and learn of the Father, that shall induce us hereunto. And as to this, I have observed already, that God the Father teaches us by the light of nature, and the revelations and discoveries he made of his mind and will by his prophets of old, and by the miracles he wrought in and with his Son Jesus Christ in attestation to his mission and doctrine, and the secret influences of his Spirit in disposing the hearts of men to attend to the force of those evidences, whereby they are prevailed upon to come unto Him and believe in Him.

In order therefore, the better to understand these things, I observe in the first place that the light of nature, Judaism and Christianity are not different religions, but are only so many different dispensations of one and the same religion, as will be evident if we consider what religion is, and wherein it consists. And it consists, "in the acknowledgment, and living under a powerful sense, of the being and perfections or attributes of the true God, as being the maker, preserver, and governor of all things in heaven and earth, of the relation we stand in to Him, and our entire dependence upon Him, every moment for our being, and all the enjoyments of our lives, in paying him the grateful tribute of thanks and praise for all the favors and blessings He bestows upon us, and humbly applying ourselves to Him for everything we want, in sincerely and constantly endeavoring to conform our selves to his will, and the perfections of his nature so far forth as we are capable of resembling Him, and solicitously seeking to recommend ourselves to his favor and obtain his acceptance in the performance of all such duties, and use of all such means, as He shall any ways discover to be acceptable and agreeable to His will." This always was, and ever will be, and can't but be, the religion, and duty of intelligent and rational creatures towards their creator and great benefactor.

The obligation to perform all this took hold of Adam, so soon as ever he came into being, and this was what all the holy patriarchs held themselves bound to, while they had little else to depend upon for this guidance besides the light of nature: this was all that the Law of Moses required, and this is all that is demanded of us now under the Gospel: so that this is all that was expected of us in a state of innocence, and this comprehends everything that is required of us even in our present state of weakness and depravity.

Indeed in this latter case, when we had fallen from God, into a state of rebellion and guilt, of ignorance, weakness, and misery, it was necessary that God should in order to our recovery, make some express and positive discovery of his mind and will to us, in matters that could not have obtained in any other case, that he should explain to us upon what terms, and by what means it should become practicable for us to regain his image and favors. This was the grand occasion of the revelation and discovery He has made to us, and which we now happily enjoy: and upon this account it was, that He opened the glorious design of treating with us by a mediator, even thro' the mediation of his dear Son. However this alters nothing of the nature of religion as above described: all that it does is to add some further obligations upon us, to the performance of our duty, and to require certain other duties of us, in cases that could have had no place but in case of our having apostatized from Him.

The glorious design of our restoration was to be accomplished by a mediator, and even by the actual appearance of that mediator in our nature, both to make an atonement for our sins by his death, and so instruct and assist us in the performance of such duties as should be necessary to qualify us for it, and this design was to be brought into execution many ages after our apostacy, in such a season and situation as God in his infinite wisdom and goodness saw most proper and convenient. In the meantime God did not see it needful to open the whole mystery of this great design all at once; but chose rather to bring on the intimations of it by degrees from age to age, according as there should be occasion for them.

Accordingly He at first gave to our original parents but some faint glimmerings of it, tho' it is very likely they were more intelligible than is accounted for, in the ancient records that are now extant relating to those times; as is rendered highly probable from the so early obtaining of the practice of sacrifices, which cannot be any ways tolerably accounted for, but by the supposition of a positive institution; and supposing an institution, it can't be conceived but that God must have in some degree explained the design of them, by intimating that the beasts that were sacrificed should be considered as representative of a greater sacrifice in time to be offered that should have virtue sufficient to answer those ends which it was obvious even to common sense, that the blood of bulls and of goats, could have no efficacy for the attainment of.

This reasonable supposition being admitted, it will be easy to consider sacrifices as the first intimation of the method God designed, wherein to bring about our recovery to his favor and acceptance by the death and mediation of his Son, and as the means whereby mankind were to recommend themselves to his favor, till that great sacrifice was to be offered, which was the great antitype prefigured and represented by them. And they were all that was positive or instituted, as far as we know of, in the religion of the ancient world: for everything else mankind were under no other guide but the light of nature, to teach them the being and attributes of God, and their duty to Him and one another, and their obligations to the performance thereof.

But inasmuch as it was necessary that God should distinguish in the eyes of the rest of mankind, that family, from whence his Son the Great Mediator, was in the fullness of time, to be derived as to his incarnate state; and at the same time, (as a proper introduction thereto) wherein He might preserve some sense of the true religion, while the rest of the world degenerated to idolatry, and from thence communicate some measure of light to the other tribes of mankind; I say for these reasons God appeared unto Abraham, and declared that in or by his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, whom therefore He resolved to take for his peculiar people, and instituted circumcision as a badge to distinguish this family from the rest of the world, and as a token of their covenant relation to Himself.

To this family therefore God communicated the light of his truth, and by them in some measure to the rest of mankind, ordering affairs so, in the course of his dispensation towards them, as to render them as conspicuous as possible in the eyes of the rest of the world, for a testimony also to them, till the promised seed should appear, in whom all mankind were equally to be blessed.

As to the law which He gave them by Moses, He never designed that so far as there was any thing peculiar in it, above and besides the religion of nature, which it every where supposed and enforced, I say He never designed this for the religion of mankind in general but only and merely for that people, aiming chiefly at two ends in the establishing of it: the one was to distinguish them from the rest of the world, and bind them the more firmly to Himself, as the family from whence He intended for the restoration of mankind and wherein He would preserve a sense of the true religion in the

world, till that great design should be accomplished: the other end was to typify and shadow forth the great sacrifice and mediation of his Son, and the means whereby we were to be accepted thro' Him, and thereby to prepare that family in particular, and raise the expectations of the rest of mankind with respect to that great event: all the civil institutions of that law aiming at the one, and all the religious rites, chiefly concerning sacrifices and purifications, aiming at the other.

So that, as the light of nature discovers God in his works and providential dispensations, and the duties we owe Him and one another in some measure, which, because of our darkness and weakness, need to be more fully explained and enforced by revelation: so Judaism was designed to be an introduction and preparatory to Christianity, whereby they should be completely explained and enforced, and at the same time, correspondent to those types and shadows, a method should be completely brought to light, whereby we may be entirely brought off from our rebellion to the performance of our duty, and graciously forgiven and accepted in the performance of it.

This law being established with these views, and the Jewish polity and religion founded thereon, God was pleased in order further to pave the way to the appearance of his Son by the gift of prophecy continued down successively from age to age, to explain more and more clearly the nature, manner, and circumstances of the great design He had in view of the restoration of mankind by his son; insomuch that long before his appearance, not only the precise time but the manner of his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension, and the nature and extent of the kingdom He was to erect among mankind, were all very clearly predicted, and set in such lights that an honest and unprejudiced inquirer might without much difficulty have found those characters punctually fulfilled in the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Now all this, the light of nature, and the law of Moses, with the prophesies attending it and subsequent to it in the following ages, which God gave for the enlightening and instructing mankind with respect to this great design of restoring us, by the appearance of his Son in our nature, together with the miracles God wrought in attestation to his mission when he did appear, I call the dispensation of the Father, containing those instructions, considerations,

and motives of credibility, which whosoever hears and learns, duly attends to and seriously weighs, cannot fail of coming to Christ, and believing in Him as the great teacher come from God to complete the whole system, and do and accomplish all that was proper and necessary to be done in order to our entire restoration. I shall therefore proceed in the next place to show particularly how they lead us to the belief of Christ as our only teacher and mediator.

And here I begin with the light of nature as the first instance of God the Father's teaching and instruction in order to our coming unto Jesus Christ. The light of nature is that inspiration of the Almighty which giveth us understanding, that power of reasoning and knowing and finding out the truth of things, as being what they really are, which God has endowed us with, whereby we are capable of reflecting, knowing and considering what we ourselves are, what God is, and what relation we stand in to Him, and one another and the obligations resulting therefrom. All which we may be properly said to hear and learn of the Father as being the original fountain of all that light and knowledge that we gain by the exercise of the faculties He has given us, upon the objects in nature and Providence that He has set before us.

As to ourselves, a little reflection and consideration will soon teach us that we are feeble, limited, and dependent beings, that in multitudes of cases we have no power of ourselves to help our selves, but all our sufficiency is of God, and this, in a natural, as well as spiritual sense; that we are so fearfully and wonderfully made as that our frame and constitution directly points out to us the kind, wise and powerful hand from whence we are derived, and yet so entirely dependent upon it, as that we cannot subsist or enjoy ourselves a moment without its continual agency in the supporting of us and providing for us; that we are not only very weak, but also very ignorant, and therefore need his instruction to teach us what to do in many cases, as well as his assistance to enable us to perform it. I say, a due contemplation of human nature would lead us to such reflections as these, and in fact has lead many to them, who have had nothing but the light of nature to depend upon. The result of which would be that humility and meekness of spirit, that diffidence of ourselves, that modest and teachable temper, which are those dispositions of mind which directly prepare and qualify us for the reception of the Gospel,

and would dispose us gladly to accept of those instructions and assistances which Christ has provided and offers to us therein for our relief and recovery.

Furthermore we learn from reflecting and looking inwards upon ourselves the miserable state of guilt into which sin has brought us. The Father teaches us much by the light of nature of the deformity and odiousness of sin, and its horrid intrinsic baseness, as being entirely beneath the dignity of our nature, and acting a direct violence upon it, and consequently, as what can't fail of being attended with uneasiness, loathing and bitter reflections, and as deserving and exposing us to the hatred and displeasure of our maker and the dire effects of his vengeance and indignation. This is what St. Paul observes of the heathen world, that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences accusing or excusing, 2 Ro. 15. Thus therefore our consciences are as it were a secret whisper from God, inspiring us with a sense of our guilt, and writing bitter things against us, which if we duly hearken and attend to we can't fail of seeing the necessity of a Savior and being earnestly solicitous to come to Christ, as the great atonement for our sins, and the only mediator and intercessor with God for pardon and mercy in our behalf.

Thus we learn of the Father by reflecting on the nature He has given us and the state and condition wherein He has placed us, and that into which we have brought ourselves, the great need we have of the mediation of His Son, and of the light and assistance He has provided for us; and now if we look abroad into the world and contemplate the works of God we may learn what manner of being he is, with whom we have to do, in this affair, and how much reason we have to depend on his benevolence wisdom and power, veracity and faithfulness to assure us that we are secure from all danger of being imposed upon, or any otherwise dealt with, in respect to the method of our recovery by his Son, than we could reasonably hope or wish.

For this end God has set this mighty and magnificent show of nature before our eyes, that from thence we might spell out his being and perfections, and learn what He is and what we should be, in dependence upon Him, in submission to Him, and imitation of Him. For the works of nature are, as it were, the language of Almighty God, whereby He is continually seeking to imprint a sense of Himself, his wisdom, power, and goodness upon our minds, while

we behold Him perpetually exerting and displaying Himself in thousands of nameless beauties, most wise and artful contrivances, and mighty and wonderful productions, all things being ranged in a most excellent order, and governed by fixed and stated laws, every thing steadily aiming at his destined end, and all conspiring to the good, the beauty, strength and advantage of the whole, so as to constitute a grand, entire, firmly connected system, agitated, and as it were animated and governed by Him the great genius of the whole.

Now this view of God in his works teaches us sundry lessons greatly conducing to dispose us to come to Christ and believe in Him; particularly such is God's goodness poured forth upon all his works, and especially in seeking them to answer all our necessities and conveniences, and so abundantly to provide for our comfort and delight, as sufficiently assures us of his fatherly care and tenderness towards us, from whence He can't but be inclined to pity us in our dark, weak and depraved estate, and having provided so abundantly for our temporal weal, much more to provide for our everlasting happiness. His wisdom is so clearly displayed in the works of nature, that we can't doubt but that it is no less to be depended upon in the dispensations of his grace to concert a most sure and effectual method for the accomplishment of our everlasting weal. His power, which all nature so loudly proclaims, assures us that He is able to work miracles for our conviction in attestation to the mission and doctrine of his Son, exhibiting the method of his grace for our recovery: and his justice, veracity, and faithfulness assure us that he can't deceive and impose upon us and therefore that the dispensation of grace taught by Christ and so attested is in all respects securely to be depended upon.

Such are the preparatory instructions God gives us by the light of nature, which, if duly attended to, greatly tend to dispose us to hearken to Jesus Christ and embrace Him as our teacher and mediator. But to these we must add in the next place, what God taught us by the Law of Moses and the prophets, as a further introduction to Christ. I have said so much of this already that I shall now have occasion to add but little upon this head. St. Paul in his Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews in abundance of passages argues this matter and plainly shows how every thing material in the Gospel was prefigured and shadowed forth by the Law; in so

much that, as he says, Gal. 3. 24. the Law was intended for a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The sacrifices were designed to be figurative representations of the great sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the priesthood appointed to offer them was designed to typify his everlasting priesthood, and the washings and purifications were to intimate that inward purity and holiness which was necessary to qualify us for an interest in the benefit thereof. Thus St. Paul everywhere explains them, particularly in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

It is likely indeed that these things were but little understood or thought of by the generality of that people. But God raised up prophets from age to age still further and further by degrees to open and explain this great mystery, till at length the several parts of it were so clearly accounted for, that it was an instance of unaccountable blindness and obstinacy in that people that they would not be convinced that Jesus had a just claim to be the person prefigured and predicted in those types and prophesies; for they were so clear and intelligible, many of them at least, that much might be heard and learned of the Father in them to induce those that were acquainted with them to come unto Christ as the person in whom they all centered and were fulfilled.

But lastly, there should remain no doubt to those who with these previous instructions would also attend to the miracles which God wrought in attestation to the mission and doctrine of his Son. And here we may reckon first of all that glorious voice from heaven when our Savior was baptised whereby the Father declared, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him. This was indeed so very remarkable, that one would think it impossible that any one upon this occasion should not so hear and learn of the Father and come unto Him.

Especially seeing that this glorious voice from above was seconded with the most astonishing miracles, which the Father wrought, or at least gave Him to work, in confirmation of this, that He was his beloved Son indeed in whom He was well pleased. Miracles for number, greatness and benevolence to mankind, by far the most extraordinary that ever were wrought in the world on any occasion, particularly in turning water into wine, walking on the sea and calming it, feeding such vast multitudes with such a small quantity of food, healing all sorts of diseases, and even raising the dead, and all at a word's speaking, by all which it

plainly appeared that all nature was entirely at his command, and consequently that the God of nature was engaged by these means to convince the world that He was the person indeed, by whom He designed to instruct and recover, to save and govern mankind. In all which mighty operations He declareth the Father worketh hitherto and I work, Jno. 5. 17. And v. 36, The works that my Father hath given me to do, bear witness of me that He hath sent me.

But above all that wonderful work of God in raising Him up from the dead, which we commemorate this day, with joy and thankfulness, can never sufficiently be admired. By this God hath given incontestable demonstration of his heavenly mission. To this He appealed with the greatest reason and with the strongest assurance, that He came from God, and that all He taught and did was to be entirely depended upon. After this, sure, nothing could be called in question. By this we are infallibly assured that it is our bounden duty and greatest interest to go to Christ and embrace Him as one able to save even to the uttermost all that come to God in and through Him.

Let us therefore diligently hear and learn all these things of the Father, with a truly teachable and obedient temper, which they tend to beget in us, and fall in with the suggestions of his Holy Spirit, which he hath also sent to move our hearts to a due attendance to these most powerful instructions, and to work in us this obedient temper, that so we may freely submit ourselves to Jesus Christ as our only hope, through whom alone we can expect mercy, pardon and acceptance with God. And let us take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from Him: but let us cleave to Him as the very life of our souls, and be his obedient disciples, and followers as long as we live, that through Him we may all at last meet together and be happy for ever in his kingdom of glory.

True Philosophy, or the Wisdom of Religion and Virtue

A Sermon on Job XXVIII, 28

[Text in Hebrew]

Preached at Newport on Rhode Island before Dr. Berkeley, Dean of London Derry, July 4, 1731.

At Stratford before Mr. Pegrum, etc., a second time. Sept. 17, 1738. 3rd. Sept. 21, 1740.

P. t. St. May 9, 1742. Fr. Prov. 9, 10. June 10, 1744.

P. t. Jan. 22, 1746. St. Jan., 1765.

St. Nov. 27, 1749. Prov. 9, 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

And unto man he said, behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

This book of Job is the most ancient book in the world, now extant, and gives us the best account of the religion of the ancient world, which consisted in the adoration of one God, the creator, preserver, and governor of the universe, and in the imitation of his moral perfections by the practice of universal righteousness and charity one towards another.

The particular design of it is to vindicate the goodness and equity of God's providence with respect to the evils and calamities that befall even good men in this life, and to show that however ignorant we are of them, yet God has the best, the holiest and wisest ends in view, even in those dispensations, and occurences, that seem to us most unaccountable, and that a profound and implicit resignation to Him under all events is our greatest duty, perfection and happiness.

In this chapter Job makes several reflections on the unsearchable wisdom of God in the works of nature, which he declares to be impenetrable to us mortals. He shows indeed that true wisdom is a thing of inestimable value, but that it does not consist merely in

the study of nature, for that however so much we direct our thoughts that way, we shall never be able to comprehend the works of God, but shall be obliged to sit down under uncurable uncertainty, and still fall short of attaining to true wisdom.

But however he assures us there is such a thing as true wisdom, which is level to our feeble capacities, and will infallibly secure our real happiness, and that God has sufficiently taught us wherein it consists. The wisdom of God indeed implies a perfect comprehension of all his works which are incomprehensible to us; but the wisdom of man consists in the practice of true religion and virtue, and this is the language of the God of Nature to mankind, and that abundantly proclaimed in all his works of nature and providence. To man He has said, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

This seems to me the sum of what this holy philosopher Job aims at in this chapter; and it is my design from hence to explain to you wherein the true wisdom or philosophy consists, which above all other things concerns mankind, in the knowledge of which there is infallible certainty and acquiescence to our minds, and in the practice of which there is complete satisfaction and happiness to all the powers of our souls.

To this purpose I must begin with explaining the general notion of wisdom, to which I take the word understanding, in my text to be synonymous or mean the same thing, and might perhaps have been better rendered by the word prudence, and in general, the word wisdom, understanding, or prudence, imports the finding out, and proposing to ourselves the best ends to be pursued, and the fittest means to those ends, and in a diligent pursuit of those ends by these means.

Particularly moral wisdom, which is that which Job here speaks of as the chief wisdom which God recommends to mankind, consists in finding out wherein our true happiness is placed, and proposing that as our chief end, and in discovering what are the directest and fittest means to that end, and in diligently pursuing our true happiness, by such means as directly tend to promote it.

In order therefore to understand the nature of this wisdom it is necessary that we consider wherein our true happiness consists. And by this word we mean the same as we express by the words ease, peace, tranquillity, the enjoyment of ourselves, satisfaction, delight, and the like, all which words imply reflection, and taking

notice of what passes in our minds, and thoughts, and feeling ourselves pleased with what we find within us.

And here it is necessary in the first place that we find ourselves free from anything that is uneasy or troublesome to us, which we call evil, particularly from pain, sickness, poverty, disgrace, and the like external evils, which greatly interrupt the enjoyment of ourselves; but these being not in our power, they don't properly come under our consideration here. What concerns us is, to do what we can to be free from them, and in such instances as those wherein we can't help ourselves, to bear them with patience and calmness, and to make the best use we can of them, to the purposes for which they are sent, which are the mortifying our evil affections, and the improving of us in virtue and goodness.

But the greatest and worst sorts of trouble and uneasiness are endless doubts, scruples, uncertainties, and perplexities of mind, and the tyranny of base lusts and evil affections, violent and perverse habits, and irregular and vicious practice, which violate the plain dictates of our minds, and upon which when we reflect we feel a perplexing contradiction and inconsistency with ourselves, which can't fail of rendering us odious and uneasy to ourselves, as being the like violent and disorderly state to our souls, as wounds, dislocations or sickness are to our bodies.

In order therefore to be happy it is especially necessary that we be free from these intellectual and moral evils, from error and doubt in our minds, and from irregularity and vice in our affections and manners, and from that remorse of conscience, wherewith they are necessarily attended. On the contrary it is necessarily requisite to our happiness that we have a free, clear and unbiased exercise of our understandings, that we have a clear and satisfactory knowledge of the truth, with respect to everything that it concerns us to know, and that we have conformable to the plain dictates of our minds, a free and habitual government of our affections and actions, in such a manner as on all occasions, readily and unreluctantly to choose and do whatsoever is really suitable to our natures, and the relations wherein we stand, and consequently necessary to our weal and happiness. In a word that all the powers of our souls be under a due regulation and be united with the objects that are suited to them, and vigorously exerted upon them, our understandings with truth, and our wills and affections with that which is good, *i. e.*, that we know all things that concern us, as being what

they really are, and that we choose and act virtuously on all occasions as it becomes us to do.

This state of the soul which consists in the union of all its powers and faculties among themselves, and with their proper objects, cannot fail of being attended with the most exquisite delight and satisfaction, when we cannot only bear, but take pleasure in the inspection of ourselves, and feel our souls in a state of health and good order, being conscious that all things are right within us, and that there is nothing to give us any perplexity or uneasiness. This state to pursue is our greatest wisdom.

From hence it is plain that we are not to seek for our happiness in sensual objects, because they are not the proper objects of our exalted powers of reason and understanding, and besides they are attended with perpetual change and uncertainty, and consequently with unavoidable toil and perplexity; though therefore they may serve for a little amusement, it will by no means answer to rest in any of them as our proper entertainment, and therefore true wisdom will not suffer us to make use of them as means to our happiness.

It also follows plainly from the account I have given of our true happiness that it is no part of true wisdom for us to be vainly inquisitive about things that it does not at all concern us to know, having no tendency to engage, direct or assist us in any virtuous or religious practice. Such are all those deep things of God which it is above the reach of our faculties to understand, and which God has not thought fit to reveal; with these we have nothing to do. Such secret things belong to the Lord, but those that are revealed to us and our children, that we may do all things that he requires of us. Deut. 29. 29.

Nor can it for the same reason be any part of our wisdom to amuse our minds with high soaring speculations about the nature of things, especially such as are built upon mere conjectures concerning which it is impossible for us ever to be certain whether we are right or wrong, nor in multitudes of cases can we arrive at any tolerable probabilities, and do but guess and speak of them like children, and at best but darken counsel by words without knowledge. With respect to such cases, the further we suffer our imaginations to rove the more we entangle ourselves in doubts and perplexities, while we can find nothing to fix our minds upon, nothing wherein we can acquiesce, and consequently nothing from whence

we can derive any true happiness or satisfaction to our minds, but rather endless toil and uneasiness.

And besides if we could make any tolerable guesses about things of this nature we should find but little true happiness without having the temper of our minds altered, to which purpose such empty speculations would have very little or no influence; and we must from the premises set this down for a certain truth and infallible rule, that whatsoever has not a direct tendency to quiet and satisfy our minds, calm and moderate our passions, and influence and govern our lives and actions, according to the rules we ought to conduct ourselves by, is no part of true wisdom, in that it contributes nothing to our true happiness.

For which reason it was that Socrates of old, the wisest of all the Grecian philosophers, took a great deal of pains to call men off from that windy sophistry and those vain empty speculations, that were so much in vogue, to the study of a virtuous life, and those things that more immediately tend to calm our minds, assuage our passions and reform our manners, as being the directest course to true happiness, and consequently the truest wisdom. He therefore bent his chief endeavors not only to banish ignorance and uncertainty but chiefly to subdue men's pride and other base affections and vices, and directed them to place their happiness in the pursuit not only of solid and useful knowledge but chiefly of unaffected piety and virtue, of sincere righteousness and benevolence.

And this we find to be also the true scripture philosophy taught long before the times of this great man, particularly by Solomon, not only one of the greatest of kings, but also one of the greatest of philosophers, in his book of Ecclesiastes, which he wrote on purpose to discover the emptiness and vanity of all sensual enjoyments, and even of knowledge itself, especially of that empty conceited curiosity that affects to pry into the impenetrable mysteries of nature and providence, and to know things above our capacity and comprehension. And after all his unsuccessful roving after happiness in such vain amusements he sets down this as the result of all his inquiries and experience. Let us, says he, Ch. 12, 12, hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole (the whole duty, and the whole happiness) of man: all that he needs to be solicitous about and engaged in; this therefore is his whole wisdom.

And even long before him, this we find from my text, to have been the philosophy of this great and good man Job, and mentioned by him as the ancientest philosophy in the world, and derived to mankind from God himself. To man he said behold, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Having therefore explained the general nature of wisdom, and showed what is requisite to our true happiness, and what is inconsistent therewith, I now proceed more particularly with my text, to show you, that our truest wisdom, and what above all other things concerns us, consists in fearing the Lord, and departing from evil; or, as Solomon expresses it, in fearing God, and keeping his commandments.

Fear is that passion which gives us uneasiness, distress and anxiety at the view of impending evil; it flows from the great principle of self-preservation, which makes us solicitous to avoid, and secure ourselves from what tends to destroy our beings, or any ways hurt us or disquiet our minds, to deprive us of pleasure, or affect us with pain or uneasiness.

God therefore is the object of our fear, in regard of our being liable to suffer evil, *i. e.*, pain or punishment, from his displeasure. It flows from a sense of our dependence upon him for our beings, and both all our enjoyments and all our hopes, and of our being accountable to him for all our behavior and actions, and liable to punishment from his just displeasure if our behavior be not conformable to his will. A thorough persuasion and sense of these principles in our minds, can't fail of filling us with the dread of God, as a just and powerful being, who both can and will inflict the severest pains upon those who perversely act contrary to his will. So that the evil of pain and punishment is the immediate object of this fear, and God to whom we know ourselves accountable only as the just author and inflicter of that evil we are exposed to, by the breach of his laws.

This is agreeable to our Savior's advice to his disciples, that they should not be afraid of them that kill the body, and have nothing else in their power, but rather that they should fear Him, who when he was killed has power to cast into hell. 10 Mat. 20. By which he would teach us that we ought to proportion our fear to the evils to be feared, and that as the greatest evil that can befall us is that everlasting punishment which is to be expected from an angry and

just God in the other world, so the fear of this ought to prevail over the fear of any evil that can be inflicted by men, the worst of which even the death of our bodies, is infinitely less than the eternal misery of our souls.

But if evil only be the proper object of fear, it will be enquired in what sense it is said concerning Israel in the latter days, Hos. 2, *ult.*, that they shall fear the Lord, and his goodness. This seems to imply that the goodness or benevolence of God was the object of fear, as well as his justice and displeasure. It is also said that perfect love casteth out fear, 1 John 4, 18, and does not this seem to imply that the fear and love of God are inconsistent with each other?

To these difficulties I answer that in the Mosaic dispensation, God found it necessary in order to awaken the minds of that stupid nation to discover himself chiefly under the character of a terrible being, that they might learn to fear his great and fearful name, who was scarce capable of being any other way wrought upon to any advantage. But in the Christian dispensation, it was his design to discover himself chiefly under the character of a most amiable and benevolent being, that those who under the former dispensation, had feared him in a manner that was only slavish and mercenary, might now no longer fear him as servants, but as children (having their fear tempered with love) and their obedience accordingly not servile but filial, not slavish but ingenuous, not forced but voluntary.

This Gospel fear may more properly be called reverence proceeding from a great sense of God's goodness, as well as his severity, and of the disingenuity, as well as the danger of disobedience to his will, and with the additional consideration of the greater danger we should be exposed to by the aggravated guilt of sinning against such wonderful goodness as should be discovered under the Gospel dispensation; upon these accounts it was very properly expressed to say they should fear the Lord and his goodness.

Now this reverential filial fear, which the Gospel requires has nothing of torment or uneasiness in it, and is so far from being excluded by love, that it is improved, promoted and increased by it, whereas it is plain that it is that slavish fear that is attended with torment that St. John speaks of and which he says is excluded by love, and this is most certain, where we sincerely and heartily love, which implies as sincere and hearty a desire and endeavor to please,

there can be no apprehensions of any danger of evil, no solicitous tormenting fears; but there may notwithstanding be the humblest reverence and lowest prostration of soul towards the person or being whom we love.

The fear of God therefore wherein the foundation of this wisdom consists, should be understood to take in every consideration that it is proper for us to be influenced by; particularly that we consider God as an almighty being, on whom we depend entirely for our beings, and all our happiness and hopes, as constantly exerting and displaying himself in all the works of nature, and rendering himself obvious and conspicuous to our senses and minds, and therefore as being everywhere present with us, perfectly knowing to our most secret thoughts and affections, and a constant spectator of all our behavior and actions; as being perfectly holy and righteous and consequently hating all vice and wickedness with a perfect hatred, and loving holiness and righteousness above all things; as being solicitous for the happiness of his creatures, in consequence of their virtuous temper and good behavior, without which he knows they cannot be happy and therefore as resolved to maintain government and good order amongst them, and consequently engaged with the utmost severity to punish the workers of iniquity, that others may hear and fear and learn to obey and be happy; as being cordially willing for his Son Jesus Christ's sake to show mercy and grant pardon to all that return from their rebellion, and graciously to assist those that are sincerely disposed to reform and return to their duty; as resolved indeed, to aggravate the punishment of those who sin on in spite of his goodness as well as his displeasure, and aggravate their sin and perverseness, by the addition of ingratitude and disingenuity: but on the other hand, to abound in all the fruits of love and benevolence to all that will be so ingenuous and dutiful as freely and cheerfully to resign up their wills to Him, from a sense of the intrinsic excellency and amiableness of His laws. In a deep sense of God under all these views consists the true fear of Him, or reverence towards him in the whole extent of it, and in this sense of God, and a conduct suitable to it, consists the whole of religion, and the whole of our wisdom and happiness.

And this powerful fear of God is justly said to be the beginning of wisdom, Ps. 111, *ult.*, in that it will engage us to depart from evil; for it is the part of a wise man and the first step he must take

to secure himself from evil and mischief, from pain and misery, according to Solomon's character of a wise man, that he foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: *i. e.*, natural evil or the evil of pain and punishment, and since God has wisely and justly annexed natural evil to moral evil, punishment to sin, so that the one, not only from the very nature of the thing, but also from his righteous appointment, will unavoidably follow upon the other, the only way to secure our selves from natural evil or misery is to avoid or depart from moral evil or sin.

And certainly there cannot be a stronger inducement to depart from sin, and to oppose it with all our might, than such a sense of God, wherein the fear of Him consists, as above described; for what can more strongly engage us to forsake our sins, than a powerful sense of the unavoidable connection between them and eternal misery and what can so strongly convince us of this, as a due sense of the power and presence and the holiness and justice of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to whom, while we continue in sin, we can't but be most odious and hateful, most vile and abominable, and to the dire effects of whose justice and vengeance, we can't but be perpetually liable; whose power is able to make our plagues wonderful, and nothing can screen us from his resentment, or deliver us out of his hands? In this case, to live in rebellion against Him is to persist in a perpetual defiance of Him even to his face.

Now this departing from evil, is the very same thing which Solomon expresses positively by keeping his commandments; because God's commands are generally expressed negatively forbidding these and those evil practices, but this in the full extent of it, comes to the same thing, as an entire performance of every positive duty; for to depart from evil entirely, is to depart from every sinful omission as well as every sinful commission, and consequently it is, to return to the faithful observance of every duty God requires of us; and therefore we very often find both the negative and positive parts of repentance expressed together. Depart from evil and do good: cease to do evil, learn to do well, 34 Ps. 14, 1 Is. 16, and many other places, so that the one necessarily in the nature of the thing implies the other.

In short the whole of what the wisdom here recommended implies is this, that we so live under an habitual sense and dread of God, as

engages us always to keep Him in our eye, as an omnipresent all-seeing, almighty, infinitely holy, just, kind, and merciful God; that thus setting Him ever before us, we may take the utmost care to do nothing unseemly, unholy, unjust, unkind, or dishonorable before Him, nothing that renders us unlike to Him, or odious and displeasing in His sight; but on the other hand that we be above all things solicitous to conform our temper and behavior to the moral perfections of His nature, and to have our wills sincerely united to His as discovered both in all His laws and dispensations.

And Oh! that there were in us all such an heart, that we might thus fear Him and keep all His commandments always, that it might be well with us and our children forever! This is our wisdom, because this is our happiness; for hereby we should act worthy of God, and suitable to the relation wherein we stand towards Him, as being His creatures, and dependents; and hereby we should act worthy of our selves and suitable to the dignity of our natures, as being intelligent, rational free and self-determining agents; hereby therefore we should do God the greatest honor, and secure to ourselves the greatest peace and tranquillity of mind, because hereby we should act as he designed us to do, and therefore can't but be conscious of our conformity to Him and of His favor and approbation of His friendship and complacency, and can't but have our souls regaled with the glorious hopes of His acceptance and blessing, and of all the fruits of His love and benevolence in time and to all eternity.

This is the directest and most compendious way to be truly happy, in that it frees our souls from all perplexing doubts, intricacies, and uncertainties, and from all worrying, enslaving, restless, and impetuous lusts and passions, and consequently from the stings of guilt and fearful expectation. For the practical principles of religion and virtue are all easy and obvious to our minds, they are the clearest and most evident truths the very knowledge of which brings unspeakable delight and satisfaction to our understandings, and they lead us on in a plain straight path easy to find, and without any windings and turnings, any intricate and perplexing mazes; they cool our lusts, and calm our passions, and render us easy to ourselves, and agreeable to all about us; they conduct us along through the several stages of life with the sincerest pleasure and contentment, and issue at last in everlasting joy and happiness.

Such are the happy fruits of the fear of God, which speak it the greatest wisdom, while irreligion and vice, on the other hand, is ever uneasy and boisterous, raging and tumultuous, like the troubled sea that cannot rest; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked and therefore sin is the greatest folly. But the wisdom which is from above is pure and peaceable. Great peace have they that love God's laws and nothing shall offend them; the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasure, and all her paths are peace; and the effect of righteousness is peace, and the fruit of it quietness and assurance forever.

This is the philosophy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came down from Heaven on purpose to teach it to us in the greatest perfection, and to set before us the most beautiful image of it done to the life, in His own most amiable example, and lastly by His death, and intercession to procure assistance and acceptance for us in governing ourselves according to its most holy precepts; after all which nothing can excuse us if we do not entirely devote ourselves to form our tempers and behavior according to its most excellent prescriptions.

Let us therefore study our own minds, to clear them of all false colors, of all prejudices, and partiality, and to improve and perfect our understandings, that we may embrace the truth in the love of it. Let us study nature not to gratify an empty curiosity but to learn things really useful and above all to lead us to God, who continually exerts and discovers His wisdom, power and goodness in all His works, that we may learn to set Him ever before us, and gain an habitual sense of His presence and inspection. And let us study ourselves and the relation we stand in to God as our maker, preserver, and governor, as our great benefactor, and our judge, and to one another as fellow-creatures, and children of the same Father and servants of the same Lord, that we may learn to know what becomes the dignity of our nature and the relations we stand in to Him and to one another, and resolve in all things to govern our hearts and lives according thereunto.

And lastly to these purposes let us study the Holy Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation, by giving us a clearer understanding of all these things, and adding yet stronger obligations, and engaging vastly greater assistances, and motives to the performance of this our bounden duty; that we may effectually

learn always to live in the fear of God, and under the influence thereof, to depart from evil, and keep His commandments, which is all our duty and all our happiness, both here in this world, and forever in the world to come.

May 15, 1731.

Of the New Creature

A Sermon on 2 Cor. v. 17

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

St. Paul's design in writing to the Corinthians was to vindicate the truth and simplicity of the Gospel against the crafty suggestions and insinuations of certain erroneous teachers: and in doing this (having been the principal instument under God of bringing them to the faith of Christ) he is obliged on sundry accounts to vindicate himself against the suggestions of those who would endeavor to advance themselves by depressing him. Not that he was at all concerned how much his own character might suffer by their means, considered in his private and personal capacity; but since he was appointed to be the chief ambassador of the Gospel for the propagation of it among the Gentiles, lest that glorious cause should suffer in which he was engaged thro' the misrepresentations he lay under, he was necessitated to vindicate his own character; upon which he was obliged to enlarge, especially in this Epistle, much beyond what he would otherwise have inclined to do. And the words I have read to you are found in that part of the Epistle wherein he is speaking of himself and those who attended him in the propagation of the Gospel, and asserting and vindicating his and their sincerity as true Christians, and as acting an upright and conscientious part in preaching the Gospel in the purity and simplicity of it.

In doing which he largely enters upon the consideration of the great motives they were governed by, which were not taken from any views from this world, but merely from those of the life to come and the nature of that purely spiritual religion which he taught. On these he does especially enlarge in my context, and particularly on the consideration of the tremendous account which they expected to give of their ministry, and of the great obligations they were under to that glorious Savior Christ Jesus whom they

preached, for his wondrous love in dying for us. For the love of Christ, says he, constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again. Wherefore, says he, henceforth, *i. e.*, since the religion which we preach thus takes its rise and obligations from the death and resurrection of Christ, and is so far from regarding this world or any of the concerns of it, that it rather consists in the renouncing of it and all motives taken from it and is indeed above any consideration of Christ himself in his earthly and sensible capacity, whose kingdom is not of this world, but begins with him where this world has done with him, reaching forward to that spiritual and invisible world whither he is gone before us to prepare a place for our eternal abode; therefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, *i. e.*, considered only with regard to this temporary animal state, yea though we have known Christ himself after the flesh, yet now (henceforth) know we him hence no more, *i. e.*, we have done with all consideration of him with regard to any views taken from this world, but regard him only as being at the right hand of God ever living to make intercession for us there, and as having entered upon a glorious spiritual kingdom, having angels, authorities and powers made subject unto him: the design of this his spiritual and eternal kingdom, being not to promote any earthly grandeur or to make any worldly show, but to engage men to renounce flesh and sense, and reduce them to the obedience of those pure and heavenly laws in conformity to which they will be united with and have an interest in that one universal heavenly society, consisting of the whole family in heaven and earth, whereof he is the great visible head and lord, and has the entire government and dispensation, that they being united to God in him, may be qualified to enjoy all the spiritual and heavenly felicities which he has purchased and prepared for them.

Therefore (as he goes on in my text, or as it would be more properly rendered, so that), if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature — old things are done away, and behold all things are become new. To be in Christ means to be a true Christian or to be a member of that body whereof he is the head. God having brought all things into being by his Son's ministration and agency appointed Him to be head of all things, and to represent Himself as the great king and governor of the whole rational creation, the

great design of this his kingdom and government being to render them entirely and completely happy, by engaging them to a sincere and universal obedience to all the laws of reason and right which are the laws of God in conformity to which the entire perfection and happiness of the rational nature consists. All those, therefore, who by his conduct and administration are reduced to such an hearty obedience to the laws of God, whether they be the inhabitants of heaven or earth, do constitute the one universal society or kingdom whereof He is the lord and king. And the holy Scriptures delight to represent this grand community under the metaphor of a body, whereof He is the head, and every person who professes to be an obedient subject of this glorious king is to be accounted of as a member of his body, and those that are really such are the real members of it. Upon which account all sincere Christians are said to be members of Christ, and consequently to be in Christ as the members are in the body. To be in Christ therefore, as to their external standing, in the character of those who are professedly his disciples and subjects; who profess to renounce the world, the flesh and the Devil, and to believe in God and to serve Him according to the instructions of his blessed son Jesus Christ. And those are really in Christ who sincerely and faithfully act up to this profession both in the temper of their hearts and conduct of their lives. Now concerning these it is said in my text that they are new creatures: and in Eph. 2. 10 they are said to be created in Christ Jesus to good works: and (4. 24.) what is here called the new creature is called the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And in Gal. 6. 15, this is mentioned as the only thing which under the Gospel avails to our acceptance with God in Christ: For in Christ Jesus, says the Apostle, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision but a new creature.

Now for the explication of these and the like expressions it is necessary to show,

I. What is meant by the new creature; and

II. Why it is so called; and

III. More particularly what those old things are which are done away, and upon what accounts all things are said to become new.

I. As to the first it is manifest from the last-mentioned text compared with two other texts parallel to it, what the Apostle

means by the new creature. For when he says neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision (*i. e.*, neither to be a Jew nor a Gentile), but a new creature, he doubtless means the same thing as he had before expressed in ch. 5, 6, where he says, neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision but faith which worketh by love; and in 1 Cor. 7, 19, where he says circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing but keeping the commandments of God. From all which texts laid together it is plain, that faith working by love and keeping the commandments of God, are the very same thing with the new creature, and that this is again the same thing with the new man in the text above-mentioned, which after God, says St. Paul, or according to the image of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. The substance therefore of what we learn from these texts is this, that the new creature consists in renouncing of all kinds of sin and wickedness which are utterly contrary to the above-mentioned design of the kingdom of God and of Christ, and in the hearty belief of all the glorious truths which He hath made known to us, and a faithful adherence to Him and our duty in spite of all temptations, under the influence of the firm persuasion of them. It consists in mortifying all those corrupt and malevolent tempers which are inconsistent with the love of God and man, and in being so heartily persuaded of God's all-sufficiency, his wisdom, power, goodness, justice, truth, and faithfulness, and of all the obligations which his redeeming love in his blessed son Jesus Christ lays us under, as to love Him with all our hearts and souls, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to testify this our love to Him by keeping his commandments, and to them by all the obliging instances of kindness, tenderness, and good will which lie in our power. This is faith working by love. It consists in a constant faithful and conscientious endeavor to be and do in all things what the Gospel requires of us, in abhorring and flying from all intemperance and impurity and every thing contrary to the obedient and dutiful temper of the Gospel, so far as to have our whole souls sincerely dedicated and devoted to God, wherein consists the nature of true holiness, and in faithfully rendering both to God and man their due: to God, the worship, love, submission and obedience which is due to Him, and to men, all the instances of that benevolence, justice, truth and faithfulness which are due to them, all which are comprehended in that righteousness which the Gospel requires of us.

That our becoming new creatures is the same thing with our being born again or born from above, Joh. 3, 3, which our Savior there makes to be indispensably necessary to our seeing or having any interest in the Kingdom of God. At which doctrine when Nicodemus wondered, our Lord tells him, art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things, in saying which he manifestly alludes to a known custom and way of speaking that had so much obtained among the Jews that it was strange Nicodemus should be ignorant of it, *viz.*, that when any man was proselyted from heathenism to be a Jew he was to be baptized or to pass through the water, and upon that occasion he was to renounce his old kindred, and method of living and to consider himself as being new born to all intents and purposes as tho' he had not at all had a being before, for tho' he was before born a heathen, yet he was now born a Jew. Thereupon to explain himself our Lord adds, except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In which words he adopts into his own institution the sacred rite of baptism with water as the outward sign which St. Paul calls the washing of regeneration, Tit. 3, and there he only adds the thing signified by it, the being born of the Spirit which St. Paul calls the receiving of the Holy Ghost. So that the meaning of it is that Christians or Christ's true disciples, upon their being baptized and making profession of his holy religion shall consider themselves as being no more men of the carnal animal world, but as being born again to a new spiritual rational and immortal life, and therefore obliged to renounce flesh and sense and all carnal and earthly things so far forth as they are temptations to any impiety or vice whatsoever, and to be devoted to God in Jesus Christ to live by his Spirit, and to live a new and holy life in obedience to his instructions in spite of all temptations, even from their nearest relatives and dearest enjoyments: for they must hate father and mother, etc., in order to be his disciples as the proselyte was to renounce his old relatives, which our Savior explains by saying whosoever loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. So that the new creature must be considered as commencing in baptism, wherein the spirit of God is sealed and conveyed to us and if after that we go into any course of wilful wickedness it must be recovered by repentance.

Upon the whole, since the new creature in my text is the same thing with the new man in Eph. 4, 24, and since this in Col. 3, 10,

is said to be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, it is plain, that this new creature consists in our being conformed to the likeness of God as far as such creatures as we are, are capable of resembling Him, and consequently in being holy as He is holy, righteous as He is righteous, and merciful as He our Heavenly Father is merciful, and by being thus followers of God as dear children, Eph. 5, 1, we become partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1, 4, which to accomplish in us is there mentioned as the great business and design of the Gospel which consists of all those great and precious promises that are given us by Jesus Christ, whose intention was therefore by the Gospel dispensation to restore us to the image of God after which we were at first created, and from which we fell by our disobedience. And this leads us to show.

II. In the second place, why this is called the new creature. And in order to this it must be observed that we were at first created after the image of God, in which estate reason and a sense of duty and right habitually prevailed over all inferior appetites and sensual inclinations; but upon the apostacy and rebellion of our first parents things became the reverse of this; our lusts and appetites and perverse affections gained an habitual ascendant over reason and conscience and a sense of duty and right; so that a sinful disposition became as it were a second nature to us. And the image of God after which we were made, became in a great measure spoiled and defaced in us. Now since it was the design of Christ in coming into the world, by the dispensation of the Gospel to renew us, and restore us back again, as far as our present condition would admit of, to that original condition wherein we were at first created; the accomplishing of this is therefore called creating us again in Christ Jesus to good works, *i. e.*, to that holiness and righteousness wherein the image of God consists from whence we are fallen. Hence all those in whom this effect is accomplished by the Gospel are called new creatures and those former sinful and perverse habits which we had contracted are called the old man with his deeds, Col. 3, 9, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, evil speaking, lying, uncleanness, covetousness, etc., even all kinds of sin and wickedness: and the contrary tempers and practices wherein the image of God consists which (Gal. 5, 22) are called the fruits of the spirit, *i. e.*, of the spiritual dispensation of the Gospel, as being wrought in us by the assistance of the Holy Spirit of God promised and exhibited

thereby, such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, in a word, the whole constellation of graces and virtues, these are called the new man, because we are hereby renewed after the image of God from whence we were fallen. Nor is this manner of speaking peculiar to the New Testament, for we find David, after his grievous fall, in the 51st Psalm, 18th, using the same expressions in his penitential prayer. Create in me, says he, a clean heart O God, and renew in me a right spirit.

Some understanding these and the like expressions of Holy Scripture too literally, have gathered from them, that in having this change wrought in us we are as entirely passive as the first chaos was in being wrought into all the beautiful forms of nature, or as a stone would be in being turned into bread, nay some have gone so far as to suppose that there is something as truly and literally created in the soul upon this occasion, as the first chaos itself was created or produced out of nothing by the almighty power of God, for they say it is in effect a new sense so different as light, etc. But it must needs be utterly wrong, as being contrary to the nature of things, as well as to many other plain texts of Scriptures to understand such passages of holy Scripture literally, so as to suppose we are totally and entirely passive in becoming new creatures. It would be contrary to the nature of things, because we are intuitively certain that we are free active creatures, and therefore for us in the ordinary way of God's dealing, to be wrought upon in such a manner as to suppose us entirely passive would be to suppose us to be treated otherwise than as being what we are; and besides it would destroy the very being of all virtue or moral goodness in us, which in the very nature of it supposes a free activity in us. It would be also contrary to many plain texts of Holy Scripture, which always supposes, and frequently requires a vigorous activity on our parts in turning from sin to God. Thus we are required to strive to enter in at the straight gate, Luke 13, 29, to cease to do evil and learn to do well. Js. 1, 16. To work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. 2, 12. And to make us new hearts, Ezek. 18, 31. From all which and many more the like passages, together with the nature of things it is manifest that we must necessarily understand these expressions of creature, creating, renewing, etc., in a metaphorical sense, and that no more is intended by them than there is some analogy and resemblance between that

alteration which is made in the soul in turning from sin to God, and that alteration which was made in the first chaos in reducing it from its disordered chaotic state into that beautiful order wherein it now appears.

And indeed if we understand them thus, there is a very great propriety in the metaphor. For sin does in effect reduce the soul into the condition of a chaos as described in Gen. 1, wherein the earth was without form, etc., as things heavy and light are jumbled all together in confusion, and things are turned as it were upside down; so the soul under the dominion of guilt and sin, is in a most wretched, dark, confused condition, while the understanding and conscience which ought to be uppermost and preside are obliged basely to truckle to the inferior lusts and appetites, and the passions which ought to be governed by reason, and to be consistent and at unity one with another, are in a state of rebellion against the reason, and in a confused inconsistency and jumble and in a perpetual war one with another. And as it was the work of creating power to reduce the confused state of the chaos into order, causing all things heavy and light to keep their proper places, and order out of confusion, and to produce out of it all those beautiful forms of creatures according to their several ranks and tribes which we now behold; so it is the work of the spirit of God under the influence of the dispensation of the Gospel to produce the like effect in the soul, by enlightening the understanding and strengthening all the powers of the mind to a fixed attention to its proper objects, and thereby enabling the reason and conscience to assert and maintain their dominion over the lusts and passions and irregular affections, and to conduct and influence them so as to acquire and support an happy unity and harmony among them, and from thence to produce all those beautiful forms of virtue, those blessed fruits of action and behavior which constitute the perfection, and happiness of the rational nature.

And the producing of this change in the soul has a greater right to be styled the creating it anew, because the force or power exerted on this occasion, is that of the very same spirit of God which was exerted in the creation of the world, it being indeed the same spirit of God which is the immediate original of all that power or force which is exerted both in the creation and government not only of the moral, but also of the natural world. For we read in the first

of Genesis, that it was the spirit of God moving on the face of the waters that, as it were brooding and enlivening the chaos, produced out of it all the various forms of creatures, and in Job. 26. 13, that it is his spirit that garnisheth the heavens. And 104 Ps. 30, concerning the works of nature, that God sendeth forth his spirit and they are created, and he reneweth the face of the earth. Thus all the productions of nature in the sensible world are ascribed to the same spirit, under the authority and administration of the same Son of God, which produceth all those blessed fruits of righteousness on the souls of men or the moral world, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. So that this spiritual or moral change in the souls may very fitly be called the new creature both upon account of the resemblance there is between the effects produced, and the original of that force or power by which they are effected.

But it does by no means follow that the manner of operating is therefore the same, or that the subjects in which the effects are produced are alike merely passive: here there must unavoidably be as wide a difference as there is in the nature of the subjects themselves. The first chaos was entirely of a passive nature, and was merely acted but the souls of men are beings of a free active self-exerting nature, and therefore cannot be said to be so properly acted as assisted in this affair, and this assistance cannot consist in creating or infusing any new faculties into them; for the powers or faculties of the soul are the same both before and after conversion, but it must consist in enabling the soul to exert those powers or faculties that were before created in it, in a manner suitable to its free, rational and self-exerting nature, so as to produce that order and harmony among them that is necessary to its perfection and happiness. So far forth indeed as it is wrought upon in being assisted, in having good thoughts suggested to it, and enabled to exert its attention to them, it is confessedly passive, but the producing of the moral fruits and efforts designed by that assistance do in the very nature of them depend upon its own free exertion of itself in consequence of its being assisted, as a child in being taught to go alone is indeed passive so far forth as it is instructed, supported, and assisted, but yet its actually going alone consists in its free exertion of its own powers and faculties in moving its joints and limbs. And now I proceed more particularly to show:

III. In the third place, what those old things are which are done away in the new creature and upon what accounts all things are said to become new. In order to which it must be first observed that by this new creature the same thing is meant as being born again, and 2. that this change which gives it the appellation of a new creature is the same thing with true repentance or a real conversion from sin to God. And this is founded in true contrition or a godly sorrow for all our past offenses and miscarriages, whereby we are brought to loathe and abhor all the errors of our ways not only for the fatal tendency of them upon ourselves to our own misery and utter undoing, but also for their native intrinsic odiousness, as being contrary to the purity and holiness of God, contrary to the rectitude and perfection of his nature and the express declaration of his will, and contrary to all the obligations of his goodness, and especially his redeeming love in Christ, and contrary to the inward sense of our own minds and the urgent dictates of our own consciences. In consideration of all which we are brought sincerely to renounce and forsake all our old sinful practices and reform whatsoever is amiss in us, without reserve to any favorite sin or any beloved lust, so as to watch and guard ourselves resolutely against every temptation, and fortify ourselves against all the enemies of our soul. And as we are hereby brought to forsake every sin so we do sincerely and resolutely apply ourselves to the performance of every duty; so as without reserve to have an equal regard to all the commandments of God. For if we should keep the whole law of God and yet knowingly and willfully offend in any one point we shall be interpreted to be guilty of all, inasmuch as we do thereby trample upon that authority which enjoins them all. Jam. 2. 10. And consequently this we find to be always mentioned as the essential character of good men and the foundation of all their hopes in the favor of God, that they have an equal regard to all his laws. Then shall I not be ashamed, says David, when I have respect to all thy commandments. 119 Ps. 6. It is therefore necessary that we have an equal regard both to God and man, that we do as faithfully discharge our duty towards God as towards one another, and that we do our duty towards ourselves in order to both the others: that we do give unto God our whole hearts, and take the utmost care to guard all our external actions and behavior: that we watch over our eyes and tongues, our hands and feet, and do not yield any of

our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but that we yield our souls unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and all our members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. Rom. 6. 13. 19. And as we should thus make conscience of doing our whole duty in all the branches and instances thereof, so it concerns us to see to it that we do every thing God requires of us with the utmost sincerity, and with a design to do our duty and as much as we can, separate from all other considerations. This, says St. Paul, is our rejoicing, the testimony of our consciences that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in the world. 2 Cor. 1. 12. And he that thus sincerely endeavors in heart and life to perform every thing that God requires of him from a sense of duty, and with an honest design to do his duty in so doing, and persevering therein in spite of all temptations, as he is truly a new creature, so concerning him it is said in my text, that all old things are done away, and behold all things are become new. And I am now to show what these old things are which are done away, and on what accounts all things are become new in him.

1. And in the first place, he that is become a new creature hath renounced his old master, the Devil, and all his works, and hath devoted himself to a new one even to Christ. All wicked men are of their father and master the Devil and his lusts they will do, Joh. 8. 44. And while they continue in their wicked courses they belong to his kingdom who was the head of the apostacy and rebellion against God. But as Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil, and set up the kingdom of God in opposition to it; so all good men, or new creatures are those who come over from the kingdom and interest of the Devil, to the kingdom of Christ, being transplanted out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Col. 1. 13., it being the professed design of the Gospel to turn us from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. Acts. 26. 18. Those therefore who complying with the design of the Gospel, become new creatures, are such as are resolved to serve the Devil no longer and do absolutely in heart and life devote themselves to the true and faithful service of God in Jesus Christ. And

2. As they have renounced their old master and his service, so they have renounced all their former vices and entered upon a new set of designs. Heretofore their main views and designs were to gratify their sensual appetites and pursue those things that might

please their carnal and animal natures, and their views reached very little further than their bodies and their temporal condition in this world. But now they look forward to the endless ages of eternity, and are principally concerned for their eternal well-being in the life to come, and for the happiness of their rational and immortal nature. With a view at this, they are not so much concerned for the pleasures and accommodations of this mortal and dying life, as for those durable riches and righteousness which will be a perpetual and never failing fund and source of happiness to them as long as eternity itself shall endure. And

3. As their views and pursuits are thus entirely altered, so also are their tempers; for they have renounced their old sensual, lustful, worldly, proud, malicious, and revengeful tempers to live in a perpetual and irreconcilable war with them, being resolved to oppose and subdue them as much as possible, at least so far as not to suffer them to have dominion over them, and on the contrary it is their greatest study to acquire a mortified, spiritual, humble, meek, forgiving and benevolent temper, to subdue their appetites and calm their passions, and raise their desires and affections from carnal and earthly to spiritual and heavenly delights, so as to have entirely a new taste: that whereas before they could relish only sensual, animal and earthly gratifications, they now have in a good measure renounced these, and disengaged themselves from them, and have acquired a delightful taste and relish for the things of God and religion, the proper objects of their rational and immortal natures, which before they had but little relish or regard for. But now these employ their chief thoughts and greatest solicitude; so that they can take the greatest delight in prayer and reading and hearing the word of God, and receiving the holy sacraments, and the exercises of self-denial, devotion and charity, whatever may tend to qualify them for a blessed immortality which they are above all things concerned to secure. And as this is with them the one thing needful and their chief concern; so

4. They have renounced all their old practices that were inconsistent herewith, and are gone into an entirely new course of life, that does, in the very nature of it, directly tend to qualify them for those blessed abodes. For he that is become truly a new creature and as such is bound for heaven, knowing that no drunkard, whoremonger, adulterer, liar, or covetous or vicious person in any kind can ever have any interest in the kingdom of Christ and of

God (Eph. 5, 5), has therefore studiously renounced and forsaken all these, all instances of intemperance and debauchery, of impiety and profaneness, and of injustice and uncharitableness, and has devoted himself to the wisdom that is from above, etc., *i. e.*, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; in a word, whatsoever things are virtuous and praiseworthy, Phil. 4, 8, so as to make it the whole business of his life to add to his faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and temperance and patience, and godliness and brotherly kindness and charity (2 Pet. 1, 6), that these things being in him and abounding he may at length have abundant entrance administered to him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And

5. That he may not be tempted to swerve from this holy and virtuous course of life, he has also renounced all his old companions and gone into a new set of conversation, as knowing that company is very bewitching, and that it is morally impossible to lead a good life in bad company. He has therefore entirely left off to converse with the intemperate and debauched, the impious and profane, the unjust and malevolent, and will no longer sit with vain persons nor go with dissemblers (Ps. 26, 4), nor have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them (Eph. 5, 11), but devotes himself to the conversation of them that fear God and work righteousness. Not that it is at all inconsistent with his character to give in to any reasonable innocent mirth and good humor; so far from this, that he accounts a free, pleasant conversation with wise and virtuous friends with whom the true pleasures of society are to be enjoyed, to be a real duty of life incumbent upon him.

6. He has in this renewed state contracted a set of new relations: he no longer considers himself as a merely animal, but as a rational and immortal creature and as related to the spiritual and invisible world, and his relation to them as founded on a nobler principle than that of flesh and blood. For in consequence of his newness of heart and life, God is not ashamed to be called his God, and as he is adopted into his family and household and has received the spirit of adoption, he is entitled to call upon God as his heavenly father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth are named. (Heb. 11, 16; Ro. 8, 15). And being united with this heavenly family of

God, all the holy angels and spirits of just men made perfect are his brethren, fellow-citizens and fellow-heirs of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, and being become a member of this spiritual family, this heavenly city and kingdom of God, the government and dispensation whereof God hath committed to his blessed Son, Christ is now become his head, lord and king: nay, concerning those that are new creatures, it is said that Christ is not ashamed to call them his brethren, Heb. 2, 11., and ye are my friends, says He, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Joh. 15, 14. In a word,

Lastly they are got out of and have renounced the old sinful miserable world that lay under the curse of God, and are got into a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness, and wherein there is no more curse, and death is abolished and life and immortality are brought to light, and their life is hid with Christ in God. (Col. 3, 3.) And when Christ who is their life shall appear they also shall appear with him in glory.

To conclude then: since this our state and condition as new creatures, since these are our advantages and glories, let us my brethren give all diligence to conduct and approve ourselves as such. Let us not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And let us put off concerning our former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our minds; and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And let us persevere faithfully all our days in acting up to this heavenly character, that we may at last through God's free grace be advanced to the consummation of all the glories of the heavenly state.

Feb. 17, 1738.

At Ripton, Sept. 30, 1739.
At Hebron, Feb. 24, 1740, from Eph. 2, 10.
At Stratford, Mar. 15, 1741, p. t.

[The two paragraphs following were added at a later date. They are evidently a revision of the last two paragraphs of the sermon.]

In a word lastly, those that are become new creatures are no longer to be considered as related to the first Adam who by his rebellion brought a curse on the world, but as being in the second

Adam who has taken away the curse and turned it into a blessing, and consequently they no longer belong to the old, sinful, miserable world which lay under the curse of God, but they are got into the new world wherein dwelleth righteousness, and wherein there is no more curse, and death is abolished and life and immortality are brought to light and their life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ who is their life shall appear they also shall appear with him in glory. In the meantime those troubles of life, and death itself which were inflicted as a curse now cease to be any curse to them, but by him who delights to bring good out of evil are converted into the greatest blessings and means to fit and prepare them for, and finally to introduce them into, a blessed immortality: so that tho' they are yet in a state of probation yet they properly belong to that blessed world wherein it is said, God will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. 2 Pet. 3, 13. Col. 3, 3. Rev. 21, 3, 4. Such is the glorious condition of those that are become new creatures.

Now therefore, my brethren, to conclude, what is there that we can rather aim at, or be more ambitious of than this glorious character and this happy condition? Let us therefore above all things be concerned to become new creatures, for you see our eternal weal depends upon it. It will be dreadful indeed to be finally cast off and rejected by God: if the God that made us should be unmindful of us and the hand that formed us should show us no favor, and nothing else be reserved for us but eternal weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. But this must be our portion unless we become truly new creatures. Let us therefore above all things be concerned that we be not deceived in this most important affair; let us deal faithfully with ourselves and thoroughly search and try our ways and examine whether we are new creatures or not. Whether we have truly repented of our sins and forsaken them, or whether we yet continue in love and league with them. Whether we are really devoted by a lively faith in heart and life to God in Jesus Christ and resolved to live in a sincere obedience to all his commandments, or whether we yet live under the power of sin and have not yet brought our wills to submit to the will of God. Let us seriously go

over all the above mentioned heads and characters and see how the matter really stands with us, and finally let us give all diligence in earnest to become new creatures, for when God has done so much towards it, it will be our own fault and we shall be inexcusable if we are not.

[At a still later date, the following paragraph was added.]

Yea but you will say all this is nothing but mere morality: I answer, 1. Be it what it will you plainly see it is not what I make it, but what the Gospel makes it. Search the Scriptures and you will see that what I have said is plainly the account they give of the new creature. But 2dly, it is a great mistake to say that these things wherein the Gospel places the nature of the new creature are but mere morality. For what is meant by mere morality is only the performance of a few duties we owe our neighbors and ourselves, such as temperance, justice, benevolence, and the like: whereas in the account I have given you of the new creature are comprehended all the duties we owe to God as well as to ourselves and our neighbors; besides mere morality regards only our present interest in this world, our health, good name, and worldly advantage, whereas what the Gospel requires in order to our being new creatures is that we perform everything that the Gospel requires towards God and man from a sense of duty to God and Jesus Christ and with a view at our being everlastingly happy in the life to come. Such is the true difference between mere morality and Gospel obedience, or rather between heathen and Christian morality. The former I confess cannot avail to our acceptance with God, but the latter is that wherein the Gospel you see places the nature of the new creature, which tho' it does not merit the favors of God (for the merits of Christ alone and the free grace of God in him must be our whole dependence), yet it is indispensably necessary to qualify us for an interest in that favor of God in Jesus Christ, and indeed it is the whole design of the Gospel to beget and promote in us these heavenly virtues, for what did the grace of God which bringeth salvation or the Gospel appear unto all men for, but to teach us to deny ungodliness, etc. Tit. 2, 12.

A Sermon on the Creation of the World

Gen. I. 1. In the Beginning God Created the Heavens and the Earth.

Moses who is the author of this book of Genesis, and is not without reason thought to be also the author of the Book of Job, is supposed to have written these two books while he lived that retired life in Midian in the capacity of a shepherd, and to have designed them for the use of his countrymen to support their faith in the God of their fathers while they were in that miserable state of bondage in Egypt. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that nothing could be more apposite to their circumstances than these two books. For it is the design of this book of Genesis to assert the being and providence of one God, the first original and supreme governor of all things, in opposition to the plurality of gods that obtained in Egypt, and most parts of the world at that time; to explain the original of mankind especially and of all that sin and misery that obtains among them, consistent with the administration of a most wise righteous and good God; since it is here discovered not to be owing to any positive influence of his, but to their own abuse of their liberty, in acting contrary to his will, and to assert the moral government of God over mankind in prescribing laws for them to observe in order to their happiness, and in rewarding the obedience and punishing the disobedience; to give an account of the origin of the several nations of the earth as proceeding from one original pair and branching out into the several tribes descending from them, and particularly of the origin of that family and nation for whose sake it was especially designed, and of that peculiar relation they stood in to God as being his covenant people, and to assure them that however depressed and afflicted their present circumstances were; yet they might depend upon his special care of them and concern for them and resolution to deliver them in due time from all their afflictions; I say these are manifestly the designs of this Book of Genesis; and correspondent to them it is the chief design of the Book of Job to vindicate the providence of God in

suffering those who are dear to him, for the trial of their faith and virtue to be grievously afflicted, and to support and comfort them with the views of a happy issue; since such is the certain course of his providence that by how much the greater their pressures and afflictions are, by so much the more glorious and advantageous shall the event be, if they persist faithful to him in spite of all temptations.

These being the views of these two books, which are doubtless the most ancient compositions that are now extant in the world, and especially this being the design of this most venerable monument of antiquity, the Book of Genesis, it was most fit that Moses should begin it in this most grand and majestic manner as he does in this first chapter, with the history of the creation of the world; it being the first principle and foundation of all religion to be deeply sensible that we and all things about us derived our being from Almighty God, and are entirely dependent upon Him for all that we are and have. Moses therefore being about to instruct his countrymen in the principles of true religion, and to inculcate upon them and keep alive among them a right notion of the true God, the God of their fathers, most properly begins with the history of the creation of the world and shows how all things derived their being and subsistence from Him, whom they were therefore to adore and confide in as the great Author and Lord of all. And this history, he introduces with the words I have now read importing a grandeur worthy of the glorious God he celebrates and the mighty work he is about to give an account of. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* In discoursing on which words

I. I shall first explain the several terms contained in this proposition.

II. I shall prove from the reason and nature of things that God must be the author of them. And

III. I shall show what use we are to make of this consideration, that God is the author of all things.

I. I shall explain the several terms of this proposition, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And,

1. By the beginning here we are not to understand the first beginning of all existence and duration, for doubtless there was long before this world which we are concerned in, a vast number of creatures. Innumerable other globes with their inhabitants there might be with whom we have nothing to do, and which therefore

Moses was not at all concerned to give an account of.* At least this is certain that there are a multitude of heavenly hosts, spiritual, rational and intelligent beings, which Moses gives no account of the original of, and which therefore had a being long before this world that we live in came into being, and who were spectators of this mighty work as it gradually arose out of its original chaos, and celebrated the glories of its divine author while he was producing this stupendous fabric. Of this God gives us a plain intimation in Job 38. 7, where giving an account of the proceedings of his almighty power in the creation of this lower world he tells us that when he laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; by which are doubtless meant the innumerable multitudes of glorious spirits which had a being before the creation of this earth, and who were admiring and joyful spectators of the wonderful progress of creating power. So that the beginning here strictly speaking, must mean only the beginning of this globe of earth with its atmosphere or airy heavens that environ it, and its various inhabitants, which Moses is about to give us an account of the creation of, or the beginning of that time or duration which is peculiar to this mansion to which mankind are confined. Not that it is in the least to be doubted but that the same glorious and almighty being who created this globe and all the creatures contained in it, was likewise the original author of all things else, both visible and invisible. 1. Col. 16. For he alone who is the author of all things exists by the absolute necessity and perfection of his nature, and consequently all other things having a precarious existence must depend entirely upon his almighty will and power, and must therefore have had a beginning as well as this lower world, and consequently must be supposed to be in general included in this comprehensive declaration of Moses. However since it is only this lower world that his history is concerned with, and the original of that which he is about to account for, it is reasonable to suppose that strictly speaking it is the beginning of that which is here chiefly to be understood.

2. The next thing to be taken notice of in these words is the author of this stupendous work: Moses tells us that it was God that created the heavens and the earth. By God here we are to understand that glorious and incomprehensible spirit who is a being of all possible perfection and consequently must exist by the absolute

* *Vid.* Whiston's *Theory of the Earth.*

necessity of his nature and accordingly being entirely independent on any other being, must have existed from all eternity, and can never cease to exist to all eternity, and must necessarily be present to every point of space, as well as every moment of duration, and being infinitely perfect He must be a boundless and all-comprehending mind to whom all things are present and perfectly known, and must be infinitely wise and powerful, and can choose and will nothing but what is fit and right and consequently must be infinitely holy, just and good. Such is that great and glorious being who is the author, the father and former of all things, who created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created, and is therefore everywhere represented as the original and fountain of all being authority and power. Not that we are to consider Almighty God as being solitary in this glorious work of creation, but as being attended with, and displaying and exerting himself by his glorious Son and his blessed Spirit.* The Son of God was the visible agent in this mighty work, who is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person (Heb. 1. 3.), by whom he made the worlds, and by whom he upholds all things that he hath made, and accordingly we are told (1 Joh. 2. 3.), that He was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made; and (1 Col. 17) All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things and by Him all things consist: even by Him in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, even the fullness of the Godhead bodily (v. 19. and 2nd Ch. v. 9.). And very fit it was that since a visible system of creatures were to be brought into being there should be a visible agent and representative of the invisible Deity in and by whom He should visibly display and manifest himself, so that whatsoever He should do, it might properly be said to be done by God, and that He who was the visible agent in bringing the creatures into being, should ever after preside over them as their King and their God, immediately exercising the almighty authority of the supreme Father and Lord of all things. The Son of God was therefore the Deity made visible and visibly exerting his almighty authority in the creation and government of the world. And as it was He who immediately commanded the creatures into being, so it was the Blessed Spirit of God

* Hence some with good reason conjecture that for this reason the word God is plural in Hebrew.

who was the immediate sensible agent in exerting the almighty power of God in bringing them into being. For as the Son of God, who is called the wisdom of God, is represented as displaying the wisdom and authority of God in creating and governing the world; so the Holy Spirit of God is represented as exerting his almighty power or his irresistible force whereby whatsoever he wills and commands is actually accomplished. Thus in the creation of the world, we read in my context that the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, *i. e.*, sensibly wrought and agitated the unformed chaos in order to produce the several creatures out of it, which were to be commanded into being. So Job says, 26, 13, By his spirit he garnished the heavens, and Elihu 33, 4, The spirit of God hath made me and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. And the Psalmist, 104 Ps. 30, Thou sendest forth thy spirit, and they are created, thou renewest the face of the earth. From all which and the like passages of Holy Scripture it appears that it is the spirit of God whose immediate force is exerted in all the productions of nature. So that whatever God does *ad extra*, with regard to his creatures he does by the immediate agency of his Son and the immediate exertion of his Spirit, and whatever they do it is he that is the doer of it by them, and hence it is that the creation of the world is ascribed to them as well as to Him. The authority and power by which all things are made and governed, being originally his and in Him as the fountain of it, and derived to and displayed and and exerted by them, as the immediate agents. When therefore it is said in my text, that God, the Trinity, created the heavens and the earth as the original word signifies, the meaning is as it is interpreted by other Scriptures, that God created the world by the glorious agency of his blessed Son and the almighty exertion of his Holy Spirit who therefore said, Let Us make man. Thus the Psalmist, 33. 6. By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made and all the host of them by the spirit of his mouth.

3. The next thing to be explained is the action of creating; God created the heavens and the earth. To create properly and originally signifies to make a thing to be which was not before. This word therefore is applicable either to things made absolutely and immediately out of nothing, *i. e.*, of which there was nothing antecedent to their existence, or to things made of pre-existent matter, which therefore tho' the principles out of which they were made had a being before them, yet the things themselves as being what

they now are, having not had a being before, are directly tho' not immediately brought into being. And the word as it is used in my text must necessarily be supposed to comprehend both these meanings; tho' the term creating is thought strictly speaking to import the former, and the term making most properly to import the latter. But I say it must be understood of both; because it manifestly appears from this history that what God first brought into being was a rude and unformed mass, antecedent to which there was nothing at all, and which therefore may fitly enough be conceived of as containing the principles and materials out of which all particular sensible beings were afterwards made, and also that God having first given being to this original mass or first chaos, did, in process of time, by agitating and actuating it, gradually bring into being all the several particular beauteous forms of creatures, which had not any actual being before, and did successively appear one after another, till the whole system of heaven and earth was completed as it now appears. So that these first words of the history must be understood to contain the whole of what Moses is going to give an account of till all was accomplished, when he concludes: Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. When therefore it is said that God created the heavens and the earth, the meaning is that God did by his almighty will and power give being to all things in heaven and earth, which before he commanded them into being had no actual existence at all; and particularly with regard to this sensible world, that he not only gave being to all the various kinds of creatures which were not before, forming them from the elements of which they consist, but did moreover produce out of nothing the elements themselves which are the principles and materials out of which all other things are formed. And

4thly. The last thing to be explained in this text is the work itself produced, and that is expressed in these terms, the heavens and the earth, where it is to be noted that as the Hebrews had no proper term for the whole, they usually expressed it by the two great integral parts of it, the heavens and the earth, importing not only these great constituent parts of the world, but all the inhabitants belonging to them and contained in them. I have already observed to you under the first head that although it must be supposed that Moses by this assertion intended to intimate to us in general this great truth that God was the original and author of all

things, yet strictly speaking it was his principal design to give us an account only of the creation of this globe of earth with the visible heavens that environ it, and the several tribes of beings contained in it. So that by the heavens here it does not seem to be his design to understand the heaven of heavens, or the mansions of the blessed angels; nay it does not appear to be his design to give any particular account of the creation of the whole system of the starry heavens any further than as they relate to this earth. For the vast regions of ether with all the mighty globes whether suns or planets comprehended in them are of such a prodigious extent that our whole earth with all its furniture bears scarce any sensible proportion of them: and as we know but little of them, and are no further concerned with them than as they twinkle to us in a dark night from their immense and amazing distances, so it cannot be supposed to be his business to be particular in his account of them.* He does indeed mention them as being created by God in his account of the fourth day. But since it is not in the least probable there should be such a vast disproportion in the works of God as there must be if he should have spent five whole days on this single inconsiderable spot of earth, and have taken up only one day in the creation of the whole host of heaven; it therefore seems necessary that we should understand Moses' account of their creation on the fourth day only of their being made visible on that day to this lower earth, not but that they might have had a being long before. For it is manifest from innumerable instances that it is not the design of the Holy Scriptures to let us into a precise and exact philosophical notion of the nature of things as they are in themselves, but to speak according to appearances and to accommodate itself to vulgar apprehensions; as I might show in sundry instances if the time would permit. What therefore I take to be the design of Moses in this first chapter of Genesis, is this, *viz.*, to give a true and historical account of facts as they would have appeared, and very likely might appear, to a spectator placed on the outer surface of this globe, which originally being a mere chaos must at first have been all darkness and confusion. But as the thinner and finer parts emerged and the grosser parts subsided, the first thing that appeared must have been light, as the fact was on the first day. In the compass of another day the light airy parts of the mass would

* *Vid.* Whiston's *Theory of the Earth*, Preface.

appear to be almost entirely separated and to surround the whole; and this atmosphere of air is what is called the firmament or airy heaven. By the third day it must be conceived that the water and earth would be considerably disengaged, and when the earth was separated from the water it would by the mighty operation of creating power appear clothed with all sorts of grass, herbs and trees. By this time on the fourth day the air would be so clear that the sun, moon, and stars would appear in the firmament, and on the fifth day the water appeared furnished with all sorts of fish and the air with fowl; and on the sixth day the land was seen furnished with all sorts of beasts, and finally with man the noblest and lord of all. And thus the heavens and earth appeared to be finished with all the host of them. These I say may reasonably be supposed to be so many apparent facts succeeding each other in the creation and consequently we must suppose this history of Moses to be a true and faithful journal of them as they did or might appear to a spectator placed on or near the surface of the solid part of this globe. Having thus explained the several terms in my text, I proceed now in the

II. Second place to prove the truth of the proposition or assertion implied in them, *viz.*, that God is the author of all things. For though this truth might be reasonably received for certain upon the sure authority of Moses, who gave such abundant evidence by the miracles he wrought, that he was divinely inspired; yet he has asserted nothing in this first verse but what might be abundantly proved from the reason and nature of things if he had never asserted it under the infallible conduct of inspiration. And since this is the prime fundamental of all religion, it must be a great satisfaction in addition to the authority of Moses if we can moreover ascertain ourselves of the truth of it, from the nature of the things themselves. To this purpose I observe:

1. That we are certain from our own consciousness that we have a being; as certain as we are that we think and feel pleasure or pain; and we are no less certain from our senses of the being of every thing about us; as certain as we are that we see, hear, taste, smell and feel. Here are therefore a vast number of facts or effects, which must have a cause for they have manifestly nothing in the nature of them that implies any necessity of existence. They not only might not have been but are evidently of a precarious and depend-

ent nature, and must therefore depend upon some cause or other. It is a contradiction to imagine them the causes of themselves, for that is to suppose them to be and not to be at the same time. And next to this it is the greatest absurdity imaginable to suppose them to come by chance, which indeed is nothing but an empty name, and is, in effect, to suppose them to come into being without any cause at all. It is likewise manifestly contrary to fact and experience to imagine them always to have been; for as to ourselves we are conscious that we have not always been: we know there has been but a small series of successions since we first began to be, and as to the sensible world about us, it consists of nothing but a vast collection of sensible impressions on our minds connected together according to certain fixed laws of which we know we are not the causes, and which therefore must depend upon some cause without us continually producing those impressions in us, so that if we could suppose an infinite succession of them, yet, since each of them is fleeting, and perishable and manifestly dependent we must still have recourse to some perpetual present cause on whom they depend. But indeed we have all the reason in the world to believe there has not been such an infinite succession, since all histories of the past ages of the world either do agree or may be well reconciled with this of Moses: and that there was such a beginning of things as is here asserted is not only confirmed by tradition, but also by the gradual rise and growth of arts and science. Since, then, these things are thus dependent and the succession of them had a beginning, they must have had and have a cause; and it is our next business to enquire what sort of cause it must be. Wherefore I observe

2dly. Whatever the cause be it must be adequate to this vast number and succession of facts. For so far forth as the effect is beyond the power of the cause it must be without any cause at all, and then all the forementioned absurdities will occur. I say the cause must be adequate to the effects. Let us therefore attentively consider the effects that from them we may learn the causes, and what sort of being He must most certainly be. Now the facts or effects produced are of two sorts: things perceived, and things perceiving, *i. e.*, the world of bodies, and the world of spirits. And

(1) Of the world of bodies, or things which we perceive by our senses. And with respect to these, the first things we take notice

of are a vast variety of sensible qualities of which all bodies or sensible things consist: such as light, colors, sounds, tastes, smells, heat, cold, wet, dry, hard, soft, rough, smooth, and many others, with all their innumerable modifications and combinations. All which we know do not depend upon our power. Being therefore effects wrought in us or impressions made upon our minds, and that in a manner inconceivable to us, to which we do not at all concur by any activity of our own, but are entirely passive, they must be produced in us by an almighty being, who must perfectly know our frame, and how to affect us in this wonderfully various manner, who must be infinitely wise to contrive those stated laws of nature according to which we are continually affected and infinitely active and powerful, thus perpetually, thus unintermittingly to operate upon us. And since not only we but all other intelligent creatures throughout the universe are thus continually affected with sensible impressions, and since nothing can act where it is not, it is manifest that this glorious, this all-wise and almighty being must be everywhere actually and intimately present, since he does thus everywhere perpetually and incessantly exert his boundless and inconceivable wisdom and power, and consequently that must be literally and strictly true which St. Paul says of Him in the 17th of Acts 28, that in Him we live and move and have our being. Moreover if we do but with a little attention consider the whole system of nature about us we shall find every thing connected together in a most wonderful manner, and the manifest tokens of choice, design, and exquisite contrivance which do evidently demonstrate the universal cause of all to be a being of the most consummate wisdom as well as boundless power and activity and of no less goodness and benevolence towards us, every thing being in the best manner fitted to our subsistence and well-being, to our use, our conveniency and delight. Let us first look at home and consider our own bodies, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made. Our eyes were manifestly made to see, our ears to hear, our hands to handle, and our feet to walk and move us from place to place: our noses were evidently made to smell what is agreeable or offensive to us, our palates to taste our food, our teeth to chew it, our stomach to digest it, our bowels to separate the nourishing parts of it, and our arteries and veins to distribute them into all parts of our bodies that they may invigorate, nourish, and support the whole frame, in order that it may be a fit and

useful system of organs to all the purposes of our souls. And as our bodies are thus manifestly made to be subservient to our minds; so it is no less manifest that they are connected with all nature about us, and that every thing around us was made to be subservient to our bodies; the air to furnish us and all other creatures with breath, the water for our drink and to refresh and invigorate the earth and render it fruitful, and the earth itself to bring forth and furnish us with all sorts of plants, and animals for our subsistence, comfort, and delight; in all which it would be endless to descend to particulars. And lastly if we consider the situation and motion of the earth itself in regard to the entire system of the world the same kind design and contrivance will still be manifest. For it is exactly at such a distance from the sun that that fountain of light and heat may sufficiently enlighten us without dazzling us and gently warm and invigorate us without scorching us; and it is so fitly situated from the moon that she may give us a good deal of comfort by enlightening our dark nights and keep up a perpetual and wholesome agitation of our waters without causing them to overflow us. And so advantageously are the diurnal and annual revolutions of our earth contrived as to give us the most grateful and useful varieties of light and darkness, and of heat and cold, so that summer and winter, day and night do not cease, but keep their perpetual courses. Thus throughout the whole world of bodies there everywhere appear the manifest tokens of the most wise contrivance and the most benevolent design, as well as the most powerful operation. And now in the second place, as to

(2) The world of spirits or perceptive intelligent and active beings, such as our rational souls are, if we attentively consider them we shall be directly led to the acknowledgement of God, the infinitely wise and powerful father and author of them. Moses tells us in this chapter that God created man in his own image, *i. e.*, with understanding and will and freedom of activity like himself, and a disposition to choose and do what is fit and right upon all occasions as He does. Accordingly, if the cause must be adequate to the effect, the conclusion must be undeniable that since we are endued with perception, understanding and will and a liberty of choice and activity, it is plain that the author of our beings must himself be intelligent and freely active. And since we had originally a disposition to do everything that is fit and right He must be invariably

so disposed: and since He is the original and supreme author of all these powers and dispositions in us, and has nothing superior to Him to limit or control Him, He must be of Himself originally and unlimitedly possessed of them, free from all restriction and imperfection. Thus from the effects produced we evidently infer the cause and that the cause must necessarily be an infinitely knowing, wise and powerful, holy, just and benevolent being whom we call God. So that according to St. Paul's doctrine, Rom. 1, 20, the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world may be clearly seen being understood from the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. I proceed now briefly in the

III. Third and last place to show what use we are to make of this great fundamental principle of all religion, that God is the author of all things. And

1. Since God is the author of all things, and since consequently every thing that is amiable in them must be originally in Him and be derived from Him, it hence follows that He must be infinitely amiable, and that therefore it is our bounden duty to love Him with all our hearts and souls as our supreme good and delight in Him above all things. And

2. In consequence of this it must also be our indispensable duty to worship and adore Him on whom we entirely depend for all that we are and have, and for all that we need and hope for in time and to all eternity; and to praise Him for all that we enjoy and pray to Him for all that we want. For

3. Since He is the author and upholder of us and all things about us, and has all things entirely at his command and disposal, it is manifestly our duty to trust and confide in Him as our only and all sufficient stay and support and to have our wills entirely united and resigned to his. And

4. Since he has in all his works of wonder abundantly demonstrated and displayed his kindness and good-will towards us, we ought from him to learn in all our conduct to express our kindness and good-will one towards another, yea even towards our enemies, as well as our friends, since he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends his rain indifferently on the just and the unjust. And

5. Lastly, to conclude, since he has given us all the powers and faculties we enjoy and furnished us with all the enjoyments and

accommodations we are surrounded with, it is our bounden duty in gratitude to him to make a wise and good use of them as he designed we should, as knowing that we received and hold them from his mere bounty and goodness, and are entirely accountable to Him for them. Let us therefore consider what his ends and designs are in them, and as we receive them from his bounty let us use them to his glory. For if we make a wise and faithful use of the favors, the powers and talents he has bestowed upon us here we may expect further and more ample demonstrations of his bounty and goodness to us to all eternity.

Jan. 31, 1738/9.

Preached at Stratford, Jan. 25, 1740. 1. It. ib. Ap. 24, 1743. fr. Rom. 1, 20. fr. Heb. 1, 10. Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands. Jul. 13, 1746. It. p. t. July 23, 1749. Heb. 1, 10. Jun. 14, 1752, p. t. Jun. 16, 1765.

A SERMON / On / THE GREAT DUTY / Of / THANKFULNESS TO GOD / And / ESPECIALLY FOR PUBLIC BLESSINGS / PSAL. CXLVII. 1. / [Text in Hebrew] / For the Fifth of November, being also appointed / by the Government for a General Thanksgiving. / 1740.

107 Ps. 5. Eod. Die. 1744. P. t. Pembrook, 1745. P. t. St., 1747. Thanksgiving, Nov. 9, 1749, from Ps. 105, 1. O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his name; tell the people what things he hath done.

Nov. 9, 1752. Th. g. Ps. 65, 1. Thou O God art praised in Zion, etc. From this text also on Thanksgiving Nov. 15, 1764, the first head and 2 articles in the last.

Of the Great Duty of Thankfulness to God, and Especially for Public Blessings

Psal. CXLVII. 1. O praise the Lord for it is a good thing to sing praises unto our God; yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.

Or as in the last translation,

Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises to our God, for it is pleasant and praise is comely.

This Psalm seems to have been composed by David on some occasion of general prosperity and when all things went very happily in his kingdom; on which occasion in a kind of transport of joy and devotion he celebrates the glories of God's providence both in the natural, political and religious advantages his people enjoyed above other nations: particularly in God's giving them rain and fruitful seasons, and a plentiful supply of the good things of this life — in giving them a general peace and tranquility and securing them from the incursions of their enemies. And in allowing them and continuing to them the happy enjoyment of the true religion. On all which accounts he concludes with saying God hath not dealt so with every nation. And these being the great favors for which we are here by the command of authority, met together to praise God, I shall from the words I have read take occasion

I. To explain the great duty here enjoined to thank and praise God for his manifold favors.

II. To enforce this duty from the general reasons and motives to it suggested in my text, the goodness, pleasantness, and decency of it. And

III. To engage us particularly to the performance of it from the consideration of the especial favors both natural, civil and religious which we enjoy.

I. I am to explain the great duty of gratitude and praise to God for his manifold favors. This duty is expressed in my text by the terms giving thanks and singing praises to God, the former of which seems designed to express the duty itself in the internal exercise of it, and the latter to express the outward testimony of it by the public devotion of speaking and singing God's praises. Gratitude or thankfulness to a benefactor is a necessary duty founded in the nature of things, and consequently of indispensable obligation, being indeed a branch of justice, which consists in rendering to every one his due, or treating every person and thing as being what it is, for these definitions do in effect amount to the same thing. A benefactor is one from whom we derive favors to which we have no claim as matters of right, but are entirely beholding to him for them as matters of grace and goodness. Such being the notion of a benefactor, he is not considered and treated as being what he is unless those favors are acknowledged as being matters not of debt but of mere grace and goodness, and unless we ascribe them to his mere disinterested benevolence; and since this is his character, it is due to him that he be considered as such, and we are unjust to him unless we pay those acknowledgments to him. Now to apply this general notion of gratitude to the situation we stand in to almighty God. He is our great benefactor, we have derived our beings and all our powers and faculties, and all our comforts and accommodations from him, and are entirely dependent upon him for the continuance of them; for it is in him that we live and move and have our being. Indeed supposing him to give us a being, it seems due to that conscious perceptive being which he has given us that we be put into a condition that would render that being desirable to us or better than not to be, nor can it I think be reconciled with his justice, and much less his goodness to put us into a condition that is worse than not to be at all, unless it be for some fault of ours, in not making that good use of that

being and those powers he had given us which we ought to have done. Now God hath of his mere goodness done vastly more for us than just what would render being desirable to us; He hath bestowed noble powers and faculties upon us, and put us into a capacity of attaining a truly noble and excellent kind and degree of happiness; He teacheth us more than the beasts of the field, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven, Job 35. 11. And he hath surrounded us with a world of good things which not only render being desirable to us but very pleasing, amiable and delightful and hath put us under advantage not only for a sensible and temporal, but also for a rational spiritual and eternal happiness. And when by our own rebellion and disobedience we had forfeited all these advantages, and had not only nothing to claim, but nothing to expect besides his severe displeasure, he has of his mere grace by his blessed Son Jesus Christ restored us and created us anew, and put us in to a capacity of recovering that happiness and those advantages which we had lost so as to be treated by him as tho' we had never offended him. In all these instances which imply innumerable particulars, He hath proved himself to be a glorious benefactor to us. Now gratitude or thankfulness to God consists in the hearty and affectionate acknowledgment of him to be such in a deep and habitual sense of our entire dependence upon him for all his favors, and expressing this sense of them by giving him the praise of them, and doing him all the honor we possibly can both by word and deed.

For as he has given us all these powers and blessings, it is very meet, right and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto him and by all the ways and means we can make use of those abilities and advantages which he hath bestowed upon us, in doing him all the honor we are able. Particularly as he has given us understandings whereby we are able to know and be sensible of the hand from whence we and all our enjoyments derive, these understandings of ours ought to be diligently employed in the contemplation of him as being what he is to us and recollecting and minutely surveying all his benefits and considering them as deriving from him. And as he has given us affections whereby we are capable of being moved and raised with a deep and affectionate sense of him and all his favors; these affections of ours ought to be exercised in loving and delighting in him as our chief good, in rejoicing and hoping in him as our great

support, in trusting and confiding in him as our all sufficient source of happiness, in fearing to offend him and being above all things solicitous to please him, and in exerting these affections in all the acts of true devotion to him. And as he hath given us tongues and speech whereby we are capable of expressing to him and one another the inward sentiments and affections of our souls; so these ought to be frequently employed in rehearsing the mighty acts of the Lord and showing forth all his praise, in addressing him with the devoutest acknowledgments and singing his praises with joy and gladness, in the use of the most excellent, comprehensive and expressive forms and hymns reciting his manifold prefections and and blessings, and the innumerable obligations we are under to his bounty and benevolence. Moreover as he has given us hands and other bodily organs for action, they ought to be diligently employed in acting as well as our tongues in speaking his praises; for since we are not only made what we are by his infinite wisdom and almighty power, but also redeemed or bought with a price, even with the price of the precious blood of his dear son, we ought to glorify him with our bodies as well as our spirits, which are equally his. In acknowledgment therefore of his goodness to us we ought to employ all our active powers in doing all the good we possibly can whereby we may be any way subservient to his glory or the good of mankind, which he considers as his own interest, so that whatsoever good is done unto them he takes it as done to himself, and herein, says our blessed Savior, is my heavenly Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, even all the fruits of true piety, mercy and charity in doing every thing in our power, according to our several stations that is truly useful and beneficial to mankind. Thus employing our bodily powers and activity in doing good under the direction of the wisest consideration we devote and present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him which is our reasonable service. And lastly, as he has given us a great variety of the good things of this life, and replenished us with his loving kindness and tender mercies, and caused his paths to drop fatness; so he requires of us, that in acknowledgment of his manifold blessings, and that we hold them of him and in a constant dependence on his bounty, we not only use them with sobriety for our own comfort but that we do honor the Lord with our substance and with the first fruits of all our increase, that as he constantly does good to us in bestowing them so we do all the

good we can in the use of them, and that as we receive all that we have from him, so we do in gratitude to him therefor, and to procure his blessing upon the rest, consecrate and devote a portion of what he gives us to him, the bountiful doner, to be laid out in works of piety and charity, for supporting his ministers, building or repairing houses and providing utensils for his public worship, and for procuring proper means for instructing the ignorant, educating the youth, and for comforting the miserable and relieving the wants of the poor and needy. These are truly good works and abounding in them will not fail of procuring a blessing, and our neglecting them will as certainly expose us to a curse, for he that hardeneth his heart against the cries of the miserable, shall cry himself and not be heard. By abounding in these works of piety and and charity we truly resemble God our heavenly Father, and are followers of him as dear children, and hereby do him the greatest honor while at the same time we do the greatest good both to ourselves and others. These are real proofs of the sincerity of our thankfulness to God for what we receive from him, and the most proper and acceptable acts of thanksgiving to him and show that we are really in earnest in our devotions. The labor of our lips and acknowledgments of our mouths are cheap and easily afforded, but these which require some expense, demonstrate us to have some meaning in what we profess, so that what the prophet Isaiah says of fasts may with no less propriety be applied to thanksgivings, and God may say, is not this the thanksgiving that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free; to deal thy bread to the hungry and bring the poor that are cast out to thy houses, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and hide not thyself from thy own flesh. Is. 58. 6. And lastly these and the like good works are such as our Savior has assured us shall be rehearsed with particular advantage and applause to us in the great day of accounts, when he will consider every good office that is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself, and that they may then turn to our account he directs us by this means to lay up to ourselves treasures in heaven where the moth and the rust cannot corrupt nor the thieves break through and steal. Mat. 6. 20. And St. Paul charges them that are rich, and consequently every one according to his ability, that they do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for them-

selves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1. Tim. 6. 18. Thus I have given you a brief account of the duty here required, and shown you the general nature, the proper exercises and genuine evidences of true gratitude or thankfulness. I proceed now

II. In the second place to enforce this duty from the general reasons and motives to it suggested in my text, the goodness pleasantness and decency of it.

1. It is, says the Psalmist, a good thing to sing praises unto our God, and to be truly thankful to him for his innumerable favors. A thing is said to be good when it is fit and right in itself, and beneficial and advantageous to us. Now nothing can be more fit and right in itself than gratitude, because it is fit that every thing should be acknowledged to be what it is, and right that it should be treated accordingly as being what is due to it and suitable to the relation between a benefactor and a dependent, as on the other hand nothing can be more wrong than either by words or deeds to deny a benefactor to be what he is and behave towards him as though we were no ways beholding to him, and much more if we treat him with scorn, neglect and contempt. Such a conduct is not only disingenuous and base but it is most vile and unjust and not only justly merits the forfeiture of the favors we receive, but the severest animadversion and punishment, which if it does not meet with in this world (as it very often does), it will certainly meet with in the next. Some wise states have severely punished ingratitude by law as rightly judging that a person capable of so base and vile a thing as ingratitude is capable of the worst of vices and can by no means be thought a good member of a commonwealth, or even to deserve the protection of it much less any favor from it, so far from this that he ought to be banished society, and be abhorred by all mankind. And if ingratitude towards men like ourselves who are but the instruments of God in conferring benefits upon us, be justly thought so great a crime and to deserve so severe a punishment how much more horrid and base, how much more injurious and criminal ought ingratitude to God to be esteemed and of how much sorer punishment should that be thought worthy, even the unsupportable pains of everlasting burning; for as much as it implies not only a contempt of the many great and inestimable blessings of this life, but even trampling under our feet the Son of God himself and counting the blood of the Covenant

wherewith we are sanctified an unholy thing and doing despite to the Spirit of Grace. So base and vile a thing is ingratitude to God, and so extremely ill-deserving, and yet this is always committed, not only when we neglect to make those suitable acknowledgments with our mouths, but also whenever we are guilty of any instance of perverseness and disobedience in our lives and behavior.

And as gratitude is a thing so fit and right in itself, and ingratitude a thing so utterly base and injurious, so the one is vastly beneficial to us, and the other as fatally mischievous. True gratitude for past favors qualifies us to receive more and at the same time entitles us to them. It qualifies us for them as it implies in us all those reasonable sentiments, those blessed tempers and those dutiful actions and that just behavior which to produce in us it is the design of God in the bestowment of all his favors, for he aims by them to induce and engage us to act the fit, the right and reasonable part in all that we do. Whereas on the other hand, ingratitude disqualifies us for the divine favor, inasmuch as it implies those tempers and that behavior which frustrate all the good and gracious ends of God's bestowments; for to what purpose should he bestow his favors when he sees that by how much the better he is to us, by so much the worse we are to him, to ourselves and one another? That instead of being humble and modest we are proud, conceited and indolent? That instead of a sober and grateful sense of his goodness we [————] like wax fat and kick against him? And instead of a compassionate tender sense of the poverty, misfortunes and miseries of others, we look down with contempt upon them, despise and neglect them and harden our hearts against their cries, and necessitous circumstances? I say to what purpose should God bestow his favors upon such untoward and ungrateful wretches? They can attain no other end but to aggravate their account and heighten their punishment and misery at last. And as gratitude qualifies the thankful for the divine favor; so it does by the gracious promises of God entitle them to it. We read that God resisteth the proud, which are always the unthankful, and that he beholds them afar off; whereas he gives grace to the humble, who in a humble sense of their dependence on God are always affectionately grateful to him for all his favors. These are his favorites, and his delight, but the others are his contempt and aversion. Thus it appears how good, how fit and right a thing it is to give thanks

unto God, and how vastly advantageous and beneficial to us. Let us now

2. In the second place consider how pleasant a thing it is to be thankful. And this it must needs be inasmuch as it must always give us the sincerest pleasure and truest joy to know and be conscious that we do what is right and reasonable in itself, and what tends to our greatest advantage and true happiness, as this has appeared to be, and to know that in doing this we please God and approve ourselves unto him, and do that which entitles us to his favor and loving kindness, which is better than life. What can give us a greater pleasure than these considerations? Especially since we feel within ourselves with these grateful sentiments all those blessed tempers and dispositions, and good fruits which are perfective of our rational and immortal nature, and which are preludes and foretastes of its heavenly and everlasting happiness? These certainly are mighty satisfactions and cannot fail of giving us vastly greater joy than when our corn and wine and oil increases. And as social joys are vastly greater than those that are merely personal; as society mightily increases the pleasure of delightful sensations, while we not only immediately feel each one the delight they give us within ourselves, but at second hand and by reflection do in a great measure enjoy the delight they give others, while we all participate of the same common joys and satisfactions; so it must be a mighty addition to the pleasure of singing and proclaiming God's praises, and being thankful to him for all his blessings and favors, that we are here surrounded with a great company of fellow Christians that are all united in the same blessed business; all possessed of the same most just reasonable and delightful sentiments; all conspiring in the same design, with one mind and one mouth glorifying the same common heavenly Father, and all jointly and severally engaged in this same heavenly exercise with the glorious view that as they are here united together as it were with one heart and soul in praising and adoring the same common Lord and almighty benefactor, so they hope shortly all to meet together never to part any more, to spend an eternity together in the same glorious employment together with an innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, crying out without ceasing day and night, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory; Glory be to Thee O Lord most high! Amen! Amen! Surely with these glorious views,

it must be a joyful and pleasant thing indeed to be thankful. And now

3. Need I add anything on the decency of this heavenly exercise which is implied in the original and expressed in the last translation wherein it is added, that praise is comely? For can there be a more decent, comely and admirable picture drawn than that which I have described before you, of what the Psalmist elegantly styles worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness? Psal. 29. Give, therefore unto the Lord, O ye mighty, Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! What can be imagined more fit, decent, amiable and beautiful than for a system of rational creatures of various kinds, all deeply pierced and strongly affected with a mighty sense of the glorious excellencies, infinite bounty and boundless benevolence of almighty God, whereof they are all in common jointly and severally partakers to be united together, and animated as it were with one soul, lifting up hearts and hands and voices together in doing the most right and reasonable thing in the world, ascribing blessing and honor and glory, power to their Father and their God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Blessed Jesus, the lamb who hath redeemed them with his precious blood, and to the Holy Spirit who hath sanctified them and inspires them with his heavenly grace, and all resolved by the perpetual and persevering practice of true holiness and virtue to the end of their lives, to live as well as speak his praises, and thereby to qualify themselves to spend an eternity together in this glorious and heavenly exercise and be as happy forever as God and Heaven itself can make them! This sure is the beauty of holiness! Since therefore it is so good, so amiable, so beautiful, so joyful and pleasant a thing to be thankful to God for all his favors, and jointly to sing praises to his holy name, let us especially on this day and upon this occasion

III. In the third and last place, proceed to engage ourselves particularly to the performance of this duty from the consideration of the special favors both natural, civil and religious which we enjoy and which authority hath called us to devote this day to the particular acknowledgment of.

1. With regard to the blessings of nature which we have enjoyed, and which our rulers call upon us this day to make a particular acknowledgment of: has not God been remarkably and particularly

favorable to us? Has he not given us both the former and latter rain in the season of them, and reserved for us the appointed weeks of harvest? Has he not caused us to rejoice both in seed time and harvest, abundantly furnishing us with the precious fruits of the earth? Has he not crowned the year with his goodness, and caused all his paths to drop fatness to us? Has he not considered us as his peculiar vineyard? And may he not justly expostulate with us as with his people of old, and say, what could I have done more for my vineyard than I have done in it? And considering our ingratitude, may he not justly go on and say, wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth only wild grapes? May we not justly fear that he will pull down the hedge that his providence hath placed about us and let in the wild boar of the wilderness to devour us, and for the future as a just punishment of our ingratitude, cause the heavens over us to be as brass, and the earth to be as iron under our feet? He has indeed hitherto in spite of all our perverseness and provocations allowed us peace and plenty, seeking by his goodness to lead us to repentance; but let us tremble to think lest he should come forth against us in terrible things in his righteousness. We are at present engaged in a terrible war, which although at present it seems at a distance, and we sit every one under his vine and under his figtree and seem to have nothing to make us afraid; but let me tell you as things are managed, we have assuredly much to fear, and have but too much reason to expect that the war will come nearer to us if not to our own doors. The only course we can take to prevent it is to cry mightily unto God, and pray earnestly that he would preside in His Majesty's councils and bless his arms; and that we may be qualified for his blessings, to add repentance to our thanksgivings, and turn to him this day with all our hearts, that iniquity may not prove our ruin.

2. Let us secondly consider how much reason we have to be thankful for the Gospel and the continuation of it in its original purity notwithstanding our making no better use of it. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound, says the holy Psalmist, they shall walk up and down in the light of thy countenance; as we in fact do this day, and may truly say with him in my context, God hath not so dealt with every nation. How many are there that yet sit in darkness and see no light? And of those that have the Gospel how many nations are there that are overwhelmed with

popish superstition, and are far from enjoying it in the purity of it? And this leads me in the

3. Third place to refresh upon our minds, the particular and almost miraculous providences which we joyfully commemorate this day, on which God has once and again signalized his providence towards our church and nation. A more hellish plot was certainly never devised that than which was on this day defeated, the design whereof was to blow up our whole three estates together by gunpowder, the King, Lords and Commons assembled in parliament. But how wonderfully did God interpose, by a mere mistake in the superscription of a letter to bring to light the hidden works of darkness, and to bring to condign punishment all those horrid workers of iniquity. And when we had after this and a most horrid rebellion from another quarter, tho' probably nearly allied to this, been again settled in a peaceable enjoyment of our national constitution and our holy religion, how did the crafty and indefatigable artifice of the popish faction contrive again to undermine our rights and privileges in the reign of his late Majesty, King James the 2nd, when we were again upon the very brink of ruin, and nothing but popery and arbitrary power were in view? But how surprisingly did the providence of God interpose upon that occasion also without the loss of a drop of blood, by turning the hearts of our nation as one man to resettle our constitution upon a better basis than ever it had had before, by making this day a second time remarkable by the arrival of his late Majesty, King William, and causing all opposition to fall before him, the happy fruits of whose interposition we enjoy this day.

(But once and again have our French and popish enemies been endeavoring to deprive us of these inestimable advantages, since the accession of the present family, by a former and now by the late rebellion, their aim being to introduce popery and slavery and bring us under the yoke of our worst enemies; but as often has our good God interposed for our deliverance; and particularly we have now to thank his marvellous goodness for the deliverance of our nation from the rebellion of the year past, the fatal effects whereof if it had succeeded we should soon have felt here.

And as the French abetted that rebellion by an invasion of our mother country, so they have this summer contrived a strong invasion for the ruin of these American colonies, by an armament sufficiently strong to have made sad havoc of us. But when there

was no human aid appeared, nor none, it seems, likely to appear, how wonderfully has God himself interposed for our defense and safety. God was our refuge, a very present help in trouble, for vain was the help of man. He sent a terrible storm, and a terrible sickness that ruined and disheartened them and utterly disabled them from making any attempt upon us. He put a hook in their nose and a bridle in their lips and sent them back by the way that they came. This has been the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. Not unto us, etc. — So that in the preservation as well as acquisition of Cape Breton, and the defense of all our coasts, we must still sing, The Lord of hosts is with us, and the God of Jacob is our refuge.) *

What thanks, what praise, my brethren are due to Almighty God for both these wonderful instances of his Providence? Let us ascribe the glory of them wholly to him and say, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto thy name be the glory for these and all the wonderful instances of thy providence! But let us remember that nothing so much concerns us as to demonstrate our thankfulness by adorning our holy profession so miraculously preserved to us, by all holy and virtuous living, etc.

126 Ps. 3. Nov. 5, 1750.
1 head and last leaf read at W. Chester, Aug. 2, 1755.

* Added in Thanksgiving 1746, from 107 Psalm 1.

A Sermon of the Spiritual Discerning of Spiritual Things

1. Cor. II, 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

St. Paul in these Epistles to the Corinthians is obliged to say many things in his own vindication against the suggestions of those teachers which by mingling Judaism with Christianity would corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel. And in this chapter he is giving an account of the sublime doctrine he taught and the plain unaffected manner in which he taught it. The doctrine he taught, he represents under these two characters, that it was from heaven, and was abundantly proved to be so. That it was not a worldly or political system that related to, or terminated with the affairs of this earthly and animal life, but that it was truly sublime and spiritual; and as it had its rise immediately from God, so it related to the spiritual and immortal nature of man; it considers him not as a short-lived sensual animal but as a rational and immortal creature; not as related to this sensible and earthly system, and placing his happiness here; but as related to a spiritual and eternal community, which is called the Kingdom of Heaven, and designed for a spiritual and endless happiness. On which accounts he calls it the wisdom of God, or a wisdom worthy of God, as proposing the noblest and sublimest ends, and accomplishing them by the fittest and most apposite means; as not being of human device and contrivance, but as being the knowledge of those things that are freely given us of God. And as it is not of human, but of divine original; so it is not built upon human reasonings and demonstrations, but upon the demonstration of the spirit and of power, *i. e.*, the miracles immediately wrought by the spirit of God in attestation to the truth of it as coming directly from him, and demonstrating it to be his mind and will concerning us. Such was the nature and evidence of the doctrine of the Gospel which he preached, truly grand and sublime, and being above all human means, it needed not any human aid, and embellishments

to set it off and recommend it to the world. Accordingly the Apostle tells us he did not make use of the enticing words of man's wisdom, *i. e.*, the formal reasonings and quaint affected eloquence that obtained in the schools and among those that were deemed the wise men of this world: but he used a plain simple and unaffected style in explaining and enforcing the great things of the Gospel. Which, however we are not to understand as tho' he did not use a true genuine eloquence, for this we find all his speeches and epistles are every where full of; but that what he disdained and renounced was the formalities of that studied and affected eloquence, and those cobwebs of metaphysical philosophy, that science falsely so called, as he styles it, which had so much obtained in the world. Not but that in a just estimation his speeches and epistles are full of the true sublime, and abound with what the critics call a just and noble simplicity, a true and exact paint of nature, every where representing things as being what they really are in lively colors. All this is the purport of what he has been saying in these chapters, and which he sums up in the two verses immediately before my text. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God: which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Such, says St. Paul, is our doctrine, and such our manner of delivering it. The former truly spiritual, sublime, and heavenly, and the latter plain, simple and unaffected. But however, says he, the natural (or as it should be rendered, the animal or sensual) man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, *i. e.*, in that capacity because they are spiritually discerned.

These words are frequently used by our new teachers to prove that strange doctrine of theirs, that those whom they are pleased to call unregenerate can have no notion at all what it is to be true Christians; any more than a man born blind, what it is to see, or what light and colors are: which renders all talk and reasoning with them entirely useless and insignificant for what ever you advance in discourse with them, it signifies nothing. They tell you you are a natural man, and therefore can't understand any thing about the things of the spirit which they feel you know nothing about them, and it is in vain to talk with you. Nothing can make

you understand them but the immediate inspiration of the Spirit without which the Bible itself is a dead letter, *i. e.*, without any meaning. And so according to them it can be no rule at all without the teaching of the Spirit. Which I take to be a very mischievous and pernicious doctrine, tending to undermine the Scriptures, and as it is mainly built upon a misunderstanding of this text, I propose to prevent the ill effects of it, by giving you a just interpretation of it.

Accordingly in discoursing on these words, I shall endeavor to show you according to the order of the words,

I. What is meant by the natural man.

II. What is meant by the things of the spirit.

III. What it is to have a spiritual discerning of them.

IV. Why it is that they are foolishness to the natural man, so that he cannot know or receive them.

I. And as to the first, what is meant by the natural man, or as it should be rendered the animal or sensual man. I answer — the word * in the original from which this character is taken, signifies the animal life, or the life of man considered as a mere animal, and as distinguished from the reasonable and immortal nature which is expressed by another,† which signifies the spiritual life, as distinguished from the animal life. Now the distinction is vastly great. For the animal as such has no notion of any pleasures or enjoyments but those of flesh and sense: he knows no other good but that of eating and drinking, and carnal pleasure, and the things that do immediately minister to his voluptuousness, that is the low gratifications of the animal or beastly appetites. Accordingly he places his chief good in these things, and can relish nothing of a sublimer nature. Let him but have his dainties, his cups and his mistresses and he wants nothing more. Let him but have his full swing at these things and he thinks himself well provided for. Talk to him about self denial and mortification, about reason and virtue, about God and religion, he knows nothing about them, he has no relish for them: they are quite foreign to all that he places his happiness in. He hears them as words in course, and would indeed take it ill that you should not think him to consider them as things of the greatest importance, because they are always spoken of as the one

* ψυχή.

† Πνοῦμα.

things needful. But however in this he is a mere hypocrite: for let him pretend what he will, he has really no gust for them, and it a weariness for him to be tied up to them. It is as great a mortification to him to be confined to exercises of piety and devotion, as it is to deny himself of his good cheer, and he has really no more pleasure in the things of God and religion than in fasting and mortification, which is a weariness to him, and quite opposite to all that he places his happiness in. He may indeed so far deceive himself as to be zealous for the outside and formalities of religion, and be very angry with you if you do not think him a sincere Christian, because he steadily goes to church and uses the common expressions of devotion: but alas! these he may and does use without the least taste for the spiritual things signified by them. Nay he may have some stirrings of affection for them while they are recited to him, but after all it is flesh and sense that has dominion over him, and tho' he may have sometimes a little glimmer of the necessity and importance and excellency of them, yet he is a man of this world and has no true relish of them as his true good and chief happiness. The good things of this life we may indeed lawfully enjoy, if we consider and enjoy them as being what they really are, the gifts of God, and the means for our comfortable subsistence while we continue in this state of probation, and the means to lead us to God, our chief good, and to engage us the more faithfully to love and serve him, with all our hearts and souls. But alas! these are considerations which the natural or carnal man has little or no thought about. He rests in them as things good in themselves and for their own sakes, and looks no further. He suffers them to carnalize and sensualize his mind, and is not at all spiritualized by them. He is so far from being led to God by them that he is rather led further from God and his service and disaffected to him and the things which he requires of us and enjoins upon us, and the more he enjoys of these things, the less savor and relish he has for the things of God and religion and eternity, and his carnal mind which relishes only carnal and sensible things, really enmity to God, it is averse to the pure and holy will of God which calls us to spiritual and heavenly things; and therefore is not subject to the law of God nor indeed can be, while it continues in this sordid and carnal condition. On the other hand the spiritual man is he that finding nothing among all sensible enjoyments that can give him true satisfaction,

looks beyond them for his genuine happiness. He considers himself as a reasonable and immortal creature, and therefore must seek his true happiness in the objects of reason and faith and in things of an eternal and unchangeable duration; he looks forward to the endless ages of eternity, and therefore can think nothing to be a true and genuine good that is confined to this short uncertain animal life; he can rest in nothing but what endures beyond the grave, and is capable of being a lasting fund of happiness when time itself shall be no more. He knows he can carry nothing but knowledge and virtue and holiness with him when he leaves this world, and therefore there is nothing else that he can truly relish as a real good while he continues here. He seeks a happiness that is eternal and unchangeable, commensurate to what he believes shall be his own duration, and therefore despising the short-lived uncertain enjoyments of time and sense, he seeks for durable riches and righteousness, for an interest in the favor of the eternal and unchangeable God, the father of his spirit, and all those virtues and qualifications in which he may most resemble God and be united with him and conformed to him. And therefore delights in nothing so much as in those things which may bring him home to God and make him a partaker of the divine nature; in consequence of which he delights above all things in the blessed Jesus who came down from Heaven to lead him thither, and to qualify him for those blessed abodes, and in all those instructions and prescriptions which Christ has set before him and recommended to him for that blessed purpose and looks for acceptance with God only through his merits and mediation. These are the things he chiefly delights in and esteems the matters of his greatest care and solicitude: and this leads me

II. To show what is meant in my text by the things of the spirit. And as to these: it is manifest from what has been said of the spiritual man, that they are those objects just mentioned wherein he places his true happiness, and the means necessary thereunto. They are called the things of the spirit, as being revealed to us in the holy Scriptures by the Spirit of God: as things belonging to and discovered by the spiritual dispensation of the Gospel considered in contradistinction from the carnal dispensation of the law of Moses: as relating to the happiness of the spiritual and immortal nature of man, and as being the things wherein his spiritual and

everlasting happiness consists. Now our blessed Savior tells us, Joh. 17, 3, This is life eternal, to know, *i. e.*, practically to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. If ever we are truly and everlastingly happy it must be in the true knowledge and never ceasing enjoyment of God our chief and sovereign good; and since Christ alone whom he hath sent, is the way the truth and the life, it must be by his instructions alone that we can come to the true knowledge and enjoyment of God, wherein consists the real spiritual life of the reasonable and immortal nature. Hence it is manifest that the knowledge and enjoyment of God, and the instructions and means which Christ hath given us for that blessed end, are what the Apostle means by the things of the spirit. God is the father of our spirits and being himself infinitely perfect and amiable, and at the same time that glorious being on whom they do entirely depend for all their enjoyments and all their hopes; he must be their supreme and sovereign good. It is from his eternal unchangeable infinite all-sufficiency, that they must derive all that can make them entirely and endlessly happy. His boundless wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, and faithfulness will administer matter for their everlasting contemplation, admiration, love and delight, and in being conformed to him, to his moral perfections, and his holy will, will consist their highest perfection and satisfaction. Now these are the objects and this is the happiness that Christ Jesus came to make known and recommend to us, and because we are alienated from God and in a state of rebellion against him, he has opened to us a sure and certain method for our recovery and reconciliation. He has made satisfaction to God for our sins, and procured pardon and acceptance for us upon condition of our true repentance and future obedience; and the assistance of his Holy Spirit to enable us to repent and reform; to return to a sincere and universal obedience; to withstand the force of all temptations to the contrary, and to persevere steadfast and faithful to the end of our days in this probation state; and he has purchased and provided a heaven full of eternal and unspeakable happiness in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, to be bestowed upon us as the reward of our faithful perseverence to the end. These are the things which the Gospel is every where full of. These therefore are the things of the spirit. These are, as they are called in my context, the things that are freely given us of God in Christ, and these

are the matter of those many exceeding great and precious promises, which St. Peter tells us, 2 Pet. 1, are given to us that by them we may be induced to become partakers of the divine nature, *i. e.*, to be conformed to the image and likeness of God as far as we are capable of it, by adding to our faith, virtue, even all the virtues of a truly holy and righteous life, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity: that these things being in us and abounding, we may thereby make our calling and election sure, and so at length have abundant entrance administered to us into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Such are the things of the spirit! And now if we would be true Christians or spiritual men we must chiefly mind these things and be governed by them in heart and life; for to be carnally minded, so as to have no relish or savor for these things, is death: it is a state of death to the soul, which in that case is said to be spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. 2. 1. But to be spiritually minded, *i. e.*, to be contempered to these things and to delight in them is life and peace: it is the true life, the spiritual life of the soul and is attended with that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Rom. 8, 6. Phil. 4, 7. What therefore next lies before me is

III. To show you what it is to have a spiritual discerning of them. And as to this, since, from what has been said it appears that the spiritual life and happiness of our souls consists in the knowledge of and delight in these spiritual things, and conforming the temper of our souls and behavior of our lives to them, it must thence follow that a spiritual discerning of them must consist in thinking of them and delighting in them as the things wherein our true happiness consists. For as in sensible things, for instance meat and drink, our sensible discerning of them must consist both in knowing them to be suitable to the constitution of our bodies, and necessary for their subsistence and preservation, and having a strong appetite for them and delight in them and tasting the sweetness and agreeableness of them; so in these spiritual things, our spiritual discerning must consist in our knowing and conceiving them as the proper objects and goods of our rational and spiritual nature as suitable to its faculties and desires, and necessary for its true and everlasting happiness, and in having a strong appetite for them, and delight in them, and in tasting the sweetness and suitableness of them to it. Hence it is that our blessed Savior, who delights

in teaching us spiritual by sensible things, resembles the dispositions of the soul towards spiritual things by the dispositions of the animal nature towards things sensible. Thus he calls the earnest desires of the soul after likeness and conformity to God in obedience to his will, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, Mat. 5, 6. And our hearty believing in him as our only atonement by his death, and receiving his doctrines and promises as ratified by his blood, and forming the temper and dispositions of our souls by them, this he calls eating his flesh and drinking his blood, Joh. 6, 53. Without which, he says, we have no life, no spiritual life, in us, and this he calls the meat that endureth to everlasting life, v. 27, which he requires us to labor for more earnestly than for the meat that perisheth. And as it is necessary for our bodily subsistence that we have a good appetite for our daily bread, that we relish it and receive it into our stomachs and digest it, that it may turn unto nourishment to our bodies; so it is necessary for our spiritual subsistence and happiness that we have a good appetite for spiritual objects, that we relish them by the spiritual taste of our souls, that we receive them into our minds and digest them in our meditations, that they may become spiritual nourishment to our souls. And as sensible meat and drink is sweet to our bodies, so this spiritual food must be sweet to our souls. Hence the Psalmist, using the same way of speaking, says concerning the laws of God, Ps. 19, 7, 8, 9, etc., that they convert the soul, rejoice the heart, enlighten the eyes, etc., and then adds, more are they to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter are they than honey and the honey-comb; and in Ps. 119, 97, 103, how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth, and v. 72, The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver. All which expressions import that the things of God, here called spiritual things, are most delicious to the soul; for they consist of the most amiable truths, and as such are most delicious to the understanding, and they recommend and enjoin the most amiable goods, and as such are most delicious to the choice, will and affections; and on these accounts, being the proper objects of the reasonable nature, they give the most true genuine and complete satisfaction to the whole soul. For what is there either of truth or good, but what is implied in the knowledge of God and Christ, and

in the conformity of the heart and life to his holy and excellent, his most righteous and reasonable laws? So that this spiritual discerning must consist in having a deep sense and delightful relish of them as implying the proper objects and genuine means of our true and everlasting happiness, and since true wisdom consists in pursuing the best and noblest ends by the fittest and most apposite means, this must be our truest wisdom to pursue our everlasting happiness by these most excellent means, the knowledge of God and Christ, and the practice of virtue and holiness. This is indeed that wisdom which will make us wise unto salvation, that wisdom which is from above, that spiritual and heavenly wisdom, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jam. 3. 17. On the contrary these things my text tells us are foolishness to the natural or animal or sensual man.

IV. And I am lastly to enquire why they are foolishness to him, so that he cannot know or receive them. And the reason is plain, because they are quite foreign both to the ends and means which he proposes and has in his eye. For as the wisdom of the spiritual man consists in pursuing his spiritual and everlasting happiness, by means of right knowledge of God and Christ and the love and practice of whatever promotes our union with God and conformity to him, so the wisdom of the natural or carnal man must be quite of another and contrary kind: it must consist in his pursuing his sensual and animal happiness by means of sensual and carnal gratifications and enjoyments. He has, as I showed, no taste, no relish, for spiritual and heavenly objects; he can take no delight in any other than carnal and sensual pleasures and worldly enjoyments. Now you know we always account those things foolish that are of no use or importance to the end that we aim at. Since therefore sensual happiness is the great end that the carnal or natural man drives at, all spiritual objects and means must be foolishness to him, because they have no relation to that which he accounts his chief good, and his chief end. As he has no delight in the end, he can have no notion of the means, and therefore they are foolishness to him; and he has no taste, no relish for them: they are quite foreign to all his views, being so far from promoting them that they are inconsistent with them and destructive of them. For pray what has hearing and reading the word of God, prayer and receiving the

Sacrament to do with the pleasures of cups and dainties, and mistresses? As well might the dunghill fowl delight in gems and gold, or the swine in fine pictures and beautiful buildings, as the grovelling voluptuous sensualist in the Holy Scriptures or books of devotion: they are foolishness to him: he has no notion of them. He is like a fish out of water while he is tediously entertained with the talk of God and Christ and heavenly things; he is quite out of his element, and it is a weariness to him to be confined to them, because they are things entirely of another kind than what he ever has been used to place his happiness in. Talk to a plowman about the art of painting, he knows not what you say. Talk to a porter about the art of music or architecture, he can't receive it; it is quite beyond him, and he is a perfect stranger to it. Just so if you talk to a vicious debauched sensualist about the pleasures of devotion, the delights of a good conscience towards God and man, and the glorious hopes of Christianity, and the peace that passeth all understanding that attend upon the victory of sin and the triumphs over our base lusts and corrupt affections, alas! these are pleasures he knows nothing of and cannot intermeddle with: as my text says, they are foolishness to him, he cannot know them; he is not capable of receiving them. His carnal mind is utterly unable to relish them; nay it is enmity to them, for it is not subject to the law of God nor indeed can be while it is thus enslaved to its carnal lusts and therefore can know nothing of the calmness and tranquility of mind and the noble delights and seraphic satisfactions that attend obedience to the law of God and a sense of his love and favor in Jesus Christ. For as the prophet says, Isai. 57, *ult.*, The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked. Thus you see the reasons why the natural or carnal man cannot either enjoy the objects or experience the satisfactions of the spiritual man: why they are foolishness to him and he cannot receive them or have any relish for them because they are spiritually discerned. It remains now my brethren, that I conclude with two or three inferences from what has been said. And

1. We hence learn that the talk of all those enthusiasts is utterly groundless and unmeaning who tell us of a spiritual discerning that no words can explain; for you see it is easy to explain what the Apostle means by a spiritual discerning, and as to any more than

what he means no Christian is concerned with it or need to trouble himself about it. Nay even a natural man altho' he can't experience it in himself, yet he can easily understand what it is, and it will be his own fault if he does not experience it; for it depends you see upon a hearty compliance with the instructions and laws of the Gospel, to which the Spirit of God will certainly enable us if we are not wanting to our selves.

2. From what has been said we learn how to know whether we have a spiritual discerning and consequently whether we are spiritual or natural men. Let us then search and try our ways; let us examine whether we delight only in carnal and sensual objects and gratifications; whether we have any relish for spiritual and eternal things; whether we can delight in the word and worship of God; esteeming it as our daily bread and our necessary food; on the other hand if it is what we loathe and are soon weary of, and can take little or no delight in it, we have but too much reason to conclude that we are yet carnal or natural men. And

3dly, and lastly, we learn that it is of the vastest importance that we do attain to this spiritual discerning; for the Apostle tells us, Rom. 2, 6. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Let us therefore devote ourselves to God in Jesus Christ, in spite of all the solicitations of flesh and sense. Let us study the knowledge of God and Christ and the things that belong to our everlasting peace now in the day of them before they are hid from our eyes, till we can really delight in them, and become inured to the practice of them, so as to take pleasure in it and let us watch against sensuality and beg the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and bring forth the fruits of the spirit, even all the fruits of righteousness here, which will make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Stratford. Sept. 6, 1767. At Stamford, Nov. 3, Mar. 4, 1741/2, Ash W., at Norwalk, Oct. 24, 1742. At Guilford, May 3, 1745. At St., June 2. Whits., 1745, fr. Rom. 8, 6. St. Whits., 1749, p. t. [——] it. Whits., 1753, fr. Rom. 8, 6.

A Sermon of the Blessedness of Giving Beyond That of Receiving

Acts XX. 35. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

St. John in the last verse of his Gospel tells us that besides those things that are recorded, there were many other things which Jesus did (which must also imply what he said), the which if they were written every one, he supposes even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. These words are supposed to be a very hyperbolical expression, and to mean only to express the exceeding greatness of the number of those things which Christ said and did besides those that are recorded. But if we consider the simplicity of St. John's way of writing, which is very free from hyperbolas or other uncommon figures of speech, it is most likely that he only meant to say, that if all that Jesus did was written it would compose so many volumes that it would be scarce probable but that many of them would be lost, or not likely that all would go down to posterity, and that therefore it was sufficient to write the most material and most memorable of his discourses and transactions, and such as would be enough to engage us to believe in him, that believing we might have life through his name as he expresses himself in the close of the 20th chapter. But however this be, thus much we may certainly gather from St. John, that there were many other memorable things which Jesus said and did that are not written, or if they were, the books are lost, as he supposed they would be; and in fact we read in the antiquities of the Church of many other gospels that were written in those early ages which are lost, of which only some fragments remain, and in some of those fragments we have several sayings, and transactions of Christ, that are not to be found in the four evangelists which we receive as canonical, which might nevertheless be true and the words that I have now read are a very remarkable instance of this kind in which the Apostle might and probably did

refer to some history of the sayings and actions of Christ then extant, that has long since been lost. For he here quotes an excellent saying of Christ which is no where to be found in the four Gospels which we now have, and yet he seems to mention it as a known saying, and was therefore doubtless to be found in some history of Christ then commonly read by the faithful tho' long since lost. However since we have the Apostle's word for it, we cannot doubt but that it was truly a saying of Christ, tho' it is not to be found in the four Gospels, and it should seem as tho' it had been a frequent saying of his but, to be sure, it is a very excellent saying, and tho' at first blush it may seem something of a paradox, it is certainly a maxim of eternal truth, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. It comes in upon occasion of his observing to the clergy of Ephesus, in testimony of his sincerity and fidelity, and in proof of his disinterestedness in preaching the Gospel, that he had been so far from seeking any private advantage that he had even labored with his own hands for his support; for which he even appeals to their own knowledge. Yea you yourselves know, says he, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me (having worked at the trade of a tent-maker, Ch. 18. 3.), which he had done that he might introduce the Gospel among them without charge, and (as he tells the Corinthians, 1. 9. 14.) tho' the Lord had ordained that those that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (the laborer being worthy of his hire, Luke 10. 7.), nevertheless, says he, I have not used this power. I have (as he goes on here) showed you all things how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

I say these words of our Lord at first blush may seem paradox to little narrow unthinking minds: for how blessed, how happy is every one apt to think himself when he receives a favor, and especially if he stood in great need of it, and were very desirous of it? How does he bless himself and thinks he has got a great boon? It can scarce enter into him to think that he that gave it him can be so happy as he is himself who receives it; for he finds himself full of joy in the possession of what he wanted, whereas he that bestowed it is now without it; so that it seems a mere paradox to him that he that gave it can be more blessed than himself who rejoices in the enjoyment of it. But however so much a paradox

this may seem to a narrow mind that never felt the pleasure of doing good, it is as I said a maxim of eternal truth, that it is more blessed to give than to receive and this is what I am now to explain and demonstrate. I was led to discourse on this subject and make these remarks from the pleasure I took in beholding the compassionate and generous spirit that appeared in so many of you towards a worthy brother * the week past, which as it was matter of joy to me and a great comfort to him, so I hope it will give you great joy and comfort both living and dying, and procure God's blessing here and an exceeding great reward hereafter, and I hope others will be led by so good an example to go and do likewise. In order to which I shall first speak of giving and receiving, and then show the vast advantage of the one beyond that of the other.

As to the first, God is the great giver of all things. He is the all-sufficient fountain and inexhaustible source of all good: from him cometh every good and perfect gift, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Jam. 1. 17. He is the original and author of all being and blessedness, who giveth unto all life and breath and all things, and needeth not any thing for himself. Act. 17. 25. And his infinite allsufficiency is the foundation of his infinite happiness. He is absolutely independent on any other being and all other beings are entirely dependent on him. It is He that has made them and given them to be what they are, and it is He that subsists them in all their several conditions and capacities. He therefore is the great benefactor and all his creatures are his dependents and beneficiaries. But he has not only made them to depend on him for being what they are, but he has also made them to be mutually dependent on one another in their subserviency to their several ends; so that they not only receive all originally from him, but must moreover be continually giving and receiving from one another, and there must be perpetually a mutual subserviency in order to answer the end of their beings in the good of the whole. So that all the harmony beauty and usefulness of the whole creation depends upon giving and receiving, *i. e.*, upon their being in such a situation one to another as to be mutually dependent and subservient, in order to their constituting one beautiful, useful and harmonious whole.

Thus in the natural world all depends upon giving and receiving. The sun, the center of our system is the fountain of light and heat

* Mr. Keys.

and all pleasing and useful qualities to all the planets, and particularly to this earth which he is continually giving and communicating to us. His heat invigorates and animates all things and renders the earth fertile abounding in an endless variety of useful fruits and beautiful leaves, and flowers, and his light enables us to see their beauty and to enjoy their usefulness and at the same time to behold him whose beauty and usefulness would otherwise be lost to us. The earth would be useless without the air and water, as they also would be useless without the earth. The earth continually receives and imbibes the water and air, and in consequence of this, by the sweet influences of the sun, is enabled to give, and is continually furnishing all the tribes of plants and animals a boundless store of provision for their nourishment and subsistence, and from the corruption of them it again receives its fatness. The clouds are continually giving rain to the earth, and the earth again returns a continual supply of vapors to the clouds. The earth gives rivers to the sea, and the sea returns them again to water the earth, as Solomon observes, Eccl. 1. 7. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence they came, thither they return again. But to enter into all the particulars would be the same thing as to give you a whole system of the course of nature. From these few instances it sufficiently appears that without this constant course of giving and receiving, all nature would soon turn into a deformed chaos, and instead of this beautiful show of harmony and order, we should soon behold a desolate waste and all things at once would be without form and void; all darkness and desolation.

And as all the beauty and usefulness of the natural world thus depends upon giving and receiving, so it is from hence that all the harmony and happiness of the whole moral world does in like manner entirely derive; all depends upon a perpetual exchange of mutual good offices. Thus the parents must nourish and educate the children, and the children must return duty and obedience to the parents. The magistrate must protect and govern the subjects, and they must return honor and submission to the magistrate. The pastor must instruct and guide the flock, and they must yield reverence and subsistence to him. The master must be just and kind to the servant, and the servant must be obedient and faithful to the master. The knowing must instruct the ignorant, and they must be obsequious and generous to their instructors. The rich must be

merciful and generous to the poor, and they must be grateful and respectful to the rich. The prosperous must pity and relieve those that are in adversity, and they must acknowledge and retalliate their kindness. We must be ready to give if we would be willing to receive, and to forgive if we would be forgiven. If we would suffer no wrong we must take care not to do any, and if we would be justly and kindly dealt with we must deal justly and kindly with others; for whatever measure we mete to others the same shall be measured to us again. And in a word whatsoever we would that others should do to us, the same we should be ready to do to them, for this is the law and the prophets; and this is the constant doctrine of our Savior and his apostles: and on this mutual intercourse of good offices depends all that is easy, comfortable and pleasant in society, and the contrary is ever attended with mischief, confusion and every evil work. Thus, as God has made all the parts of nature, by being mutually subservient to each other, to be subservient to the comfort and well-being of each other, and has placed us in such a state of dependence upon one another for our mutual well-being, that we can by no means expect to receive good without doing good, nor to be happy either in our selves or in one another without being ready to contribute all we can to each other's happiness, and thereby to the well-being and happiness of the whole. So that the health of the natural body does not more depend upon the circulation of the blood, in which the heart and all the members are continually giving and receiving, than the happiness of the body moral and politic depends upon a constant intercourse of all mutual good offices. Thus I have briefly shown you that all the harmony of the natural, and all the happiness of the moral system entirely depends upon a mutual giving and receiving.

And as we consist of a twofold nature, body and spirit, so giving and receiving must equally relate to both. As we need to receive so we must be ready to give what is needful to the well-being of each other with regard to our temporal weal in this world; and much more as we need to receive, so we must be ready to give instruction, direction or whatever may contribute to the perfecting of our immortal nature and rendering us everlastingly happy in the life to come: being designed by God not only to contribute all we can to render our condition as comfortable as may be while we live together in this present state, but also to promote in each other as far as we are able all those accomplishments and qualifications

that may tend to make us completely and everlastingly happy together in a better world.

Now since all our happiness together not only in time but to all eternity depends thus on giving and receiving, as you have seen, let us in the second place consider as a powerful motive to this intercourse of good offices, this excellent maxim which our blessed Savior suggests, and demonstrate the great blessedness of giving beyond that of receiving; and ever affectionately remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive. And here it must first be observed that this saying of our Lord does suppose that in many cases and on many accounts it is a blessed thing to receive. It is a great blessing to have our being and so many excellent powers and faculties as we enjoy whereby we are capable of resembling and enjoying God and by that means of being happy in the enjoyment of ourselves. It is a great blessing that we have received so many excellent talents and advantages in the right use of which we may advance ourselves to a greater degree of perfection and happiness. It is a great blessing to be subsisted so comfortably with such a variety of accommodations to make our beings tolerable and desirable to us in this world, but above all it is an inestimable blessing to enjoy the Gospel and the means of grace in order to prepare and qualify us for perfect happiness in the life to come: all which blessings we daily receive from our good God, our great and supreme benefactor, who has likewise given us husbands or wives, or parents or chidren, or brothers or sisters and other relations, friends and neighbors, and continues them to us and us to them which are all unspeakable blessings that we receive from him, and what a blessed thing is it to receive and enjoy all the comforts and advantages of society? To receive instruction in ignorance, comfort in adversity, relief in poverty, help in weakness, attendance in sickness, and tenderness, pity, compassion and a readiness to assist and relieve us in all circumstances of calamity and distress. I say what an unspeakable blessedness is it to have our wants relieved, and to receive the good that we stand in need of in all the various circumstances of life, whether prosperous or adverse? And what thanks, what love and obedience are due to God our great benefactor for all the innumerable blessings we receive from Him? And what love, gratitude and readiness to requite as far as lies in our power, are due to all our kind friends and neighbors for all the good offices we receive

from them? These are the blessings of receiving and the duties incumbent on the receiver. But tho' it is so great a blessedness to receive, our Lord here tells us it is a greater blessedness to give; and this will appear from the following considerations.

In the first place the character of the giver implies sufficiency and abundance, whereas that of the receiver implies deficiency and want. He that receives does but enjoy the supply of his want, if he has that, whereas he that gives not only has the satisfaction of enjoying what he wants to answer his own occasions, but the great additional satisfaction of having more than enough for himself, and of supplying the necessities of others. God has a boundless all-sufficiency, an infinite fund of happiness within Himself, not only for himself but for a whole world of creatures that depend upon Him, and this his infinite sufficiency cant but yield him the enjoyment of infinite satisfaction, so that by how much the less any creature of his needs for himself, and by how much the more he contributes to the happiness of others, by so much the nearer he approaches to the perfection and happiness of God; and by how much the nearer he approaches to God, by so much the greater blessedness he must enjoy. Hence it is plain that by how much the giver has a greater sufficiency and abundance than the receiver, by so much the greater blessedness must he be possessed of, since he is conscious that he has not only enough for himself, but abounds wherewith to supply the wants of others, whose condition therefore must be so much the more inferior to his as he is so far from having wherewith to supply the needs of others, that without the assistance of his benefactor, he has not enough for himself. O blessed state to have enough and to abound! How much more blessed than to want and receive? How much more blessed to know and be able and willing to teach others, than to be ignorant and want to be instructed? How much more blessed to have wealth and to be in a condition and to have a disposition to relieve the wants of others, than to be in want and in a condition to be relieved? How much more blessed to enjoy health and be able and active in comforting and attending on the sick than to be sick and infirm and to need and receive the good offices of those that are in health? And so in all other instances, how much more blessed is the condition of him that gives than him that receives? To this we may add

In the next place that the character of the giver implies a state of independency whereas that of the receiver implies a state of

dependence. He that receives depends upon him that gives for all the comfort and advantage he enjoys in what he has received; whereas he that gives has no dependence on him that receives for the pleasure he has in his abundance or in the good use that he makes of it in doing good. God's peculiar glory and happiness consists in this that as he has a boundless sufficiency within himself not only for his own happiness but for the being and well-being of all his creatures: so he can have no dependence upon them for any thing, whereas they are obliged by the necessity of their natures to depend upon him for every thing. Hence it is plain that by how much the less any of his creatures are in a state of dependence upon others, by so much the nearer they approach towards the participation of his blessedness, and consequently by so much the greater blessedness they must enjoy. By how much therefore the giver is less in a state of dependence than the receiver, by so much the greater must his blessedness be, while he knows that he approaches so much the nearer to God, especially if at the same time he is conscious of the like dispositions towards those that depend upon him as God, the Father of all things, has towards his creatures. He may indeed and ought to rejoice in his dependence upon the all-sufficient God, but by how much the less his dependence is upon others, by so much the greater must his satisfaction be. How blessed a state must it be to be thus independent? How much more blessed than to want and depend? By how the more blessed the one is than the other; by so much the more blessed it is to give than to receive.

Upon the whole then it appears that the advantage is vastly upon the side of the giver beyond that of the receiver, as the character of the one is human, whereas the character of the other is divine. To give is God-like and consequently glorious; so that mankind can in nothing make so near an approach to God as in giving relief to those that stand in need for the supply of their necessities either of body or mind. It is to be instrumental in the work of God. And what is here observed with respect to giving is equally true with regard to forgiving, which consists in giving pardon to offenders. How much more blessed, glorious and god-like is it not to have done amiss, and so not to need forgiveness but at the same time to be ready to forgive others, than to have offended and so to need and receive forgiveness ourselves? How blessed and glorious a thing it is to be followers of God as dear children and to walk in love as Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, and to be kind and tender-

hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us? What a noble and divine pleasure is it to have a tender sympathy in the distresses of others and to have the satisfaction of relieving them? To sympathise with them in the pleasure of feeling themselves relieved, and to feel the pleasure of doing it, *i. e.*, to feel the pleasure of communicating so great a pleasure to others under their afflicted circumstances; for if there be a vast pleasure by sympathy in communicating pleasure to others on all occasions, how much greater must it be when the comfort and pleasure of their being relieved stands in contrast to the greatness of the trouble from which they are freed? And what an unspeakable, what a divine pleasure must it needs give us to be conscious, to know within ourselves, that we do in these things resemble God our heavenly Father and Christ our Blessed Redeemer, and that we do hereby become partakers of the divine nature? Especially since we do hereby know that we do what is fit and right in itself and what is a sacrifice well-pleasing and acceptable in his sight, who sees the sincerity and benevolence of our hearts, and what cannot fail thro' the merits and mediation of Christ of securing us an interest in his favor and approbation; of procuring his blessing upon us, upon our basket and our store, and all that we have and enjoy in this world, and an endless interest in his love and favor in the life to come.

And in the last place, this leads me to observe that what vastly inhances the blessedness of giving beyond that of receiving, is the consideration of that glorious reward of God's free grace which is laid up for the givers in the heavenly world. He has this to consider that while he is laying out himself in doing good he is laying up for himself a good foundation against the time to come that he may lay hold upon eternal life. He is laying up treasures in heaven in bags that wax not old which the moth and the rust cannot corrupt nor thieves break thro' and steal. He is making to himself friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when he fails here they may receive him into everlasting habitations. He has a glorious and pleasing prospect of that blessed day when our Lord, the great judge of the quick and of the dead, shall call him to an account and find what an advantageous use he hath made of the talent committed to his trust, and shall pass that happy sentence upon him: Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He has the unspeakable satisfaction

to know that he is acting the part of the blessed Jesus who went about doing good, and who when he was rich became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich; and that whatever good he does in giving to any of his poor members here on earth, he considers it as done to himself, and in the great day of accounts will make this gracious declaration in his favor before all the world, I was hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye ministered unto me; for inasmuch as ye did these things unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did them unto me; Come therefore, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Such is the glorious blessedness of the giver beyond that of the receiver; for such are the promises made to him in which the receiver considered as such, can have no share. And who now can doubt but that it is more blessed to give than to receive. O blessed and glorious day when those who have been great benefactors to mankind shall be surrounded in the blessed regions above with the great numbers of those who had enjoyed the happy fruits of their benevolence, and who perhaps by their means had been qualified for those blessed abodes! There is the happy teacher who having been instrumental in turning many to righteousness now shines as the stars forever and ever, being surrounded with those happy souls whom he has conducted to those blessed mansions. There is the generous benefactor who by contributing largely towards forwarding that blessed work, whether by providing for the support of the ministry, or by building or adorning churches, colleges, or schools, or by whatever method the interest of true religion or learning can be promoted and honored; attended by a numerous train of happy people who glorify God and rejoice in him as being instrumental in promoting their best and eternal good! There is the tender-hearted and charitable neighbor who having had a compassionate regard to the poor and needy, the helpless and destitute, the fatherless and forlorn, was ready to help and comfort, to support and relieve them under all their distresses, and is now gloriously surrounded by great numbers of those once miserable creatures, now advanced to that blessed state wherein all tears are wiped from their eyes, and sorrow and sighing is forever fled away, who rejoice in them as being the blessed instruments in comforting their afflictions relieving their necessities, and helping them along through this vale of tears to

those everlasting and glorious habitations! And what joy, what triumph at the happy meeting, and the endless fellowship and participation of those immortal joys? Who would not be above all things ambitious of that inconceivable blessedness?

Let these glorious considerations animate and engage us all to be always ready to every good work, and not only so, but to abound and be rich in good works; and let us think nothing too much to do or suffer that we may attain to such an unspeakable blessedness. Let us be ready to go to the utmost of our ability, and if we have but little, yet out of that little let us willingly contribute something towards the public good and the relief of those that need. Let us remember the widow's mite, and bless God who has assured us that every man shall be accepted and rewarded, according to what he has and not according to what he has not, provided only that there be first a willing mind to do what we can. And no doubt but it will be found in the great day of accounts, that many who were poor and unable to do much in this world will meet with a glorious reward even for that willing mind, tho' they could do but little, when many shall find no mercy who showed none, and meet with that sorrowful doom, Go ye cursed, etc., for I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me no drink, naked and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison and ye visited me not, for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren ye did it not to me. And so in other instances they shall sadly suffer for omitting what they might and were able to have done.

You have seen, my brethren, what a blessed thing it is to give rather than to receive. But let the giver remember after all that there is a danger of losing that blessedness if he is not influenced by right considerations. Our Savior tells those that do it to be seen of men they have their reward here and can expect none hereafter. Indeed he is there speaking of private alms, not of public benefactions, which in the nature of them must be openly done so causing their light to shine before men, that others beholding their good works may by following their good examples glorify our Father which is in heaven, who is hereby glorified that we bear much good fruit. However in these necessarily open benefactions, we should take care to be meek and humble, to avoid priding ourselves in them, or thinking to merit by them, much less to atone for any instances of known wickedness. We should give God the glory, both of our having ability to do good, and of our having a disposi-

tion to it. It is his blessing alone that maketh rich, and it is of his grace that we are enabled to make a good use of riches and of every other talent. We should therefore on all occasions think of that saying of the Apostle: Who made thee to differ and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? We should be so far from looking down with contempt on our poor neighbor, that we should rather consider ourselves or ours as being liable to the same case, and look up to God with thankfulness that he hath made it otherwise. We should, moreover, consider that knowledge, riches or whatever other advantage we enjoy are talents God has betrusted us withal, of which he expects a strict account; and that he has given them, not out of partiality to us, but that we may make a good use of them and be able to give a good account of them; and as he hath given some to be poor that they may learn to exercise patience, humility, resignation and other graces suitable to their condition, so he hath given them to be always with us, that we may have proper occasion to exercise charity, compassion, liberality, and other graces suitable to our circumstances, and that we may have opportunity to give and do good, and learn to do it from a sense of duty to Him as well as charity to them, and that we may also learn to delight in being as like Him as ever we are able, and be so far from indulging ourselves in sloth and luxury, as that we may be the more industrious in laboring in our several callings that we may have to give to him that needeth. Let these good considerations therefore always influence us both to be ready to do good upon all ocasions, and to do it in such a manner as that we may feel the unspeakable blessedness of it within our own minds here and meet with the blessed and glorious reward of it hereafter.

Etc.

St. Nov. 18, 1744. It. p. t. Nov. 27, 1748. Jan. 21, 1753. N. Y., Ch. and Chap., Aug., 1756. Str. Aug., 1767.

A Sermon of the Eternal Rule of Justice

St. Matth. VII, 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

Our Blessed Lord having in this sermon been giving an exposition of the moral law and rescuing it from the corrupt glosses put upon it by the scribes and pharisees, gives this great maxim of universal righteousness as a summary of all he had said. The pharisees rested in the external action and outward show of religion and morality, whereas He entered into the heart and laid the foundation there, and sets down this rule as the test whereby we may always safely try the goodness or badness both of our thoughts and actions. He refers us to our own hearts, and bids us look into our selves and consider what treatment we our selves would in all reason expect from others: what tempers and dispositions, what languages and behavior, we would think reasonable, fit and right in them towards us, and from this we must conclude what is our bounden duty in our dispositions and deportment towards them. We can't but see with half an eye that what is right in them towards us must for the same reason be right in us towards them, and that it must be ridiculously partial and unjust to weigh in one scale to ourselves, and in another to them, and that nothing can be more fit than that with what measure we mete to others it should be measured to us again.

This rule is founded in that self-evident maxim, that it is fit that every person and thing be considered and treated as being what it really is, and is enforced upon us from the inward reflections and sentiments or feelings of our own minds, and is therefore what we can no more shake off or get rid of than we can of ourselves; so that while we have our being our own consciences can't but reproach us for every instance wherein we knowingly act contrary to it, as on the other hand they cannot fail to approve and applaud us whereinsoever we are governed by it. It is likewise a most extensive principle in the consequences of it. It enters into all the relations

wherein we do or can stand with regard to others, and prescribes to all the dispositions and exertions or actions whereby we are anyways capable of affecting them either with pleasure or pain, or doing anything that can contribute to their happiness or misery. It is therefore a rule of the vastest importance as being of such a vast extent; so that our Lord does well to say, this is the law and the prophets. The meaning is, and can be nothing short of this, that it has been the great design of God; the chief point he has always had in view in all his dispensations to mankind from the beginning; in all the types and institutions of the law of Moses, and in all the instructions of his prophets ever since; and we may add, in all the discoveries of the Gospel itself, which Christ abundantly shows in this admirable Sermon in the Mount. I say, in one word, it has been God's great end in all the discoveries he has made of himself and his mind and will to mankind from the beginning of the world to this day, to engage us to the love and practice of universal righteousness in heart and life; to do as we would be done by; to consider ourselves in every capacity and relation wherein we stand, and what treatment we should expect from others in that capacity and make that the rule of our conduct towards them: *i. e.*, to do what is fit and right upon all occasions and this in effect, will amount to the same with this, that we promote the happiness of others as we would wish them to promote ours, which will be the same thing as to promote our own happiness by doing all that we reasonably can to promote the happiness of others. This, I say is all that God aims at in all his dispensations towards mankind. He aims at their happiness and therefore wills everything that may contribute to it. This is the law and the prophets. Or as our Savior says concerning those two great commandments, the love of God and of our neighbor (both which are in effect comprized in this one rule), on these hang all the law and the prophets.

This therefore being so important and so extensive a rule, I propose in the following discourse to explain it and carry it into its several branches, and show how it does in effect extend to all our behavior, especially towards our neighbors. But as we commonly say there is no general rule without some exceptions; so we may say concerning this, *i. e.*, according to the sound of the words, tho' if it be rightly explained and understood there is and can be no exception to it. The true meaning of the rule therefore is this; not

whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you (however so unreasonable your desires are) do ye unto them: for this would patronize all the unreasonable things imaginable.

For instance: suppose I am of such an extraordinary and unreasonable a disposition that I could wish my neighbor would give me so much strong liquor as to make me drunk. It cannot be supposed to be our Savior's meaning that it is therefore my duty to give him so much as to make him drunk. Or suppose I am of so idle and avaricious a temper that I could wish my wealthy neighbor would give me so much as to maintain me in idleness and luxury. It cannot therefore by my duty, if I am able, to give him so much, or to think him a niggard if he does not give me so much. This would be indeed a ridiculous perversion of this rule; as ridiculous as it would be because I am distracted, and wish one neighbor would give me a sword to slay another, therefore it must be my duty to give one neighbor who is distracted a sword wherewith to slay a third person.

Because every man is so far forth beside himself as he desires anything that is unreasonable, anything that is so far from being good for him that it is really destructive to himself or others. Or suppose I could wish if I am a criminal that the magistrate would not execute the law upon me, therefore I should think if I was a magistrate I ought not to execute the law upon a criminal. This would be a grand perversion of this rule, because in this case, I should make a most unreasonable judgment in sacrificing the public weal to that of an individual person. The meaning therefore of this rule can be no other than this: that whatsoever we can reasonably and equitably wish others to do to us that it is our duty to do unto them; for we ought not to desire anything of others that is not fit and reasonable to desire, everything being duly considered and taken into the account. It is therefore necessary that our own and everyone's real character and circumstances be truly known and exactly weighed in order to make that judgment which this rule implies; for its meaning really is the same with this, that we should take care always to think and act with regard both to ourselves and others according to what is their and our real character, and this being duly considered, that we place ourselves as nearly as we can in each other's circumstances, and from what we should in that case expect from them, judge what our duty is towards them.

This being then the true sense of this rule, that we consider what is the real character of any being or person, and our situation with relation to him and think, affect and act accordingly, it will indeed infer our duty towards God and ourselves, as well as towards one another. Thus with regard to God: His real character is that He is that infinitely wise, powerful and benevolent being who made preserves and governs the world, on whom we do absolutely depend for all our happiness and all our hopes. Now the duties that we owe to Him are nothing else but such thoughts and affections and such a conduct and behavior as are due to such a character; and that is such a temper and behavior as we should reasonably expect if it were possible for us to sustain such a character. We do tacitly, as it were, place our selves in God's stead, and thence infer the duties that we owe to him, *i. e.*, all that love, trust, fear, hope, submission, imitation, homage and worship which are due to such a glorious and almighty being as He is from such reasonable and dependent creatures as we are. And with regard to ourselves, we do by reflection consider what the real character of human nature is, as being a reasonable, active and immortal creature at present placed in a mortal body, attended with various animal sensations, appetites and passions, the due regulation of which is necessary to its true happiness. Now the question is what is due to such a character from itself? In determining which, we do, as it were, divide ourselves into two persons whereof the one is considered as substituting himself in the other's stead and thence inferring what is due from the one to the other, *i. e.*, from himself in one capacity to himself in another, *viz.*, to do all he can to moderate his animal appetites and passions and to cultivate and improve his reasonable and immortal nature, which implies all the virtues of prudence, humility, moderation, temperance, meekness, and the care of our souls, without which we may be said not to do by ourselves as we should be done to by ourselves, if we would act up to our real character.

But as this great law or rule of justice is more clearly conspicuous in social duties between man and man, I propose to consider and explain it more particularly with regard to them. In doing which it must first be observed that it consists of two parts, the one negative, and the other positive. The negative part of it is that we should not do that to another that we would not have done to ourselves, *i. e.*, that whatsoever we should think to be wrong or injuri-

ous if done to ourselves, that it must be our duty by all means to avoid and not to do it to our neighbor. *E. g.*, for the same reason that I think myself wronged in being belied, robbed, cheated, neglected in distress, etc., I must think it wrong in me to rob, cheat, or neglect my neighbor. The positive part of this rule is, that we should do everything to one another that we would have done to us, *i. e.*, that whatsoever we should think to be right when done to ourselves, that it must be our duty by all means to do to our neighbor. *E. g.*, for the same reason that I think it right that my neighbor should speak the truth, and deal honestly and kindly by me, and be helpful, if he can, to me in my necessities and distresses, etc., I must speak truly, and deal honestly and kindly by him and be helpful to him, if I can, in his necessities and distresses. And the like in all other cases.

It must in the next place be observed that this rule both in the negative and positive part of it is as well concerned in the regulation of our thoughts and affections as of our words and actions. *E. g.*, as to thoughts, if I would not have my neighbor think unkindly and censoriously of me, for the same reason I must not harbor unkind and censorious thoughts concerning him; and if I would that he should put a favorable and kind construction on my words and actions, I must put the kindest and best construction I can upon all that he says and does. And as to the affections or passions, if I would not that my neighbor should bear a spirit of hatred, anger, envy, malice, or any instance or degree of malevolence towards me, I must for the same reason suppress, restrain and mortify these or any other untoward lusts or passions towards him. On the other hand if I would have my neighbor love me and have a sincere hearty good will towards me, I must for the same reason love him, and have a sincere hearty good will towards him. Moreover as to our words, which are the means of expressing those our inward sentiments and affections, for the same reason that I would not have my neighbor rail and revile, backbite, belie, or misrepresent me, or say any abusive or malicious thing to me or of me, and should think it very wrong in him so to do, I must think it equally wrong in me to treat him in the like abusive manner and must carefully avoid these and all other the like instances of a licentious and unbridled tongue. And on the other hand as I would have my neighbor always speak kindly and affably, truly and friendly to me and of me; so I must be ready to say all the friendly, kind and

obliging things both to him and of him that I truly can. And lastly as to our behavior and actions which are another kind of means or ways of expressing our sentiments and affections, in these it is our duty in a more especial manner to avoid every thing in our conduct towards our neighbor that we should think wrong in him towards us, and do everything in our deportment towards him that we should think right and reasonable to expect from him with regard to us. Now our behavior and actions must be considered both as they relate to the several particular relations wherein we stand, and as they relate to society in general.

1. The several particular relations, wherein we stand are those of husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, magistrates, subjects, ministers, and their people. Particularly, if I am a husband, as I would expect my wife should behave towards me with the tenderest love and fidelity and all the good offices that can tend to make my life pleasant and comfortable, avoiding all untowardness and everything that may savor of any alienation of affection, I must think it my duty to avoid everything that is cross or unkind, disobliging, or disaffecting, and treat her with the tenderest love and unshaken fidelity, and be ready to every good office that may tend to make her life as comfortable as I can: and the same must be the case of the wife with regard to her husband. Again, if I am a parent, as I should reasonably expect all submission and dutiful obedience and reverential deportment from my child, and that he should avoid everything that is untoward and undutiful; for the same reason if I am a child I must think it my duty to avoid all untowardness, and undutifulness and whatever may be grievous to my parent, and behave with all reverence, submission and dutiful obedience towards him or her, be it father or mother. And if I am a child, as I should in all reason expect to be provided for with all necessary instruction and support from my parents according to their ability, and be treated by them with all proper tenderness so far as can consist with my being duly governed and conducted to my best good; so I must think it my duty if I am a parent, to provide to the utmost of my ability for the subsistence and instruction of my children, and treat them with all the tenderness that can consist with that government which is necessary to train them up to the best advantage. Moreover, if I am a master, I must put myself as near as I can in the condition of my servant and consider what it would be fit and reasonable

to expect in that condition with regard to necessary instruction and comfortable subsistence, and must accordingly be just to him and provide what may make his life comfortable and instruct him in what is necessary for his everlasting welfare, as knowing that I also have a master in heaven. And if I am a servant, as I can't but know if I was in the condition of my master I should reasonably expect all dutiful behavior and free and cheerful obedience and all honesty and faithfulness; these therefore must be my duty towards him. Furthermore if I am a magistrate, I know were I one of the people, I should reasonably expect to be protected and defended in all my just rights, and to have impartial justice done me in all cases wherein I am injured; this is therefore what I must faithfully and conscientiously do to the people in all my administrations. And if I am one of the people I know it is fit and reasonable that the magistrate expect of me reverence, duty and obedience to law and order and to be supported and rewarded in the due execution of his office: these therefore must be my duties with regard to him. And lastly if I am a minister of religion, as I would not if I were one of the people, be by any means misled or imposed upon, but be taught the truth as it is in Jesus according to the purity and simplicity of the Gospel, and have a good example set before me in conformity to its holy precepts and have its ordinances duly administered; so I must consider these as my indispensable duties to the people committed to my charge. And if I am one of the people, as I know I should think, were it my character, that it is fit and reasonable that the ministers of religion should be treated with all proper reverence and dutiful behavior and their ministrations be constantly and seriously attended upon, so these must be my duties towards them: and as I know, making it my own case in worldly affairs that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that every one should be duly rewarded according to his work; so I must more especially think it my bounded duty cheerfully and generously to reward with temporal good things him that faithfully labors in spiritual things to which he must devote the chief of his care and time, to promote my everlasting happiness. Thus you see how this sacred rule extends to every particular relation wherein we stand, and contains in it all the duties incumbent upon us in each of them.

2. I proceed now in the next place to consider the extent of it

in the several duties which we owe to society in general. And here it must be considered as it relates to our neighbor's life — family — estate — good name — and liberty.

1. As it relates to our neighbor's life. And as to this, every one knows that by the great law of nature, the law of self-preservation, he is laid under a necessity to be above all things solicitous to preserve his being, which is the foundation of all other enjoyments, and for the same reason he must be solicitous that he may have a comfortable enjoyment of that being, such, at least, as may render it desirable to him. He must therefore thus unavoidably conclude as I am above all things concerned to continue in being and to enjoy my self comfortably, I must for the same reason be solicitously tender of the life and health of my neighbor, as I would have him tender of mine. And as I would therefore have him avoid everything that may tend to destroy my life and health, so I must ahbor and avoid everything that may tend to the destruction of his life and health. And as indulging the ill-natured passions, may issue in fighting, maiming, and even murder itself, it must follow, that as I would by no means run the hazard of having my life or health or the comfortable enjoyment of my self endangered by the anger, malice, or revenge of another, or any quarrels or contentions that may arise from the untoward indulgence of them; so I must think it my indispensable duty to mortify these untoward tempers in my self, and by no means suffer them to arise to such a degree as to be troublesome to my neighbor, much less to be any way hurtful or injurious to him: and for the same reason I must not indulge intemperance which will be very apt to kindle and heighten those base lusts and turbulent passions that will render me troublesome or mischievous to my self or others. On the other hand, as I would have my neighbor be loving, kind, tender, and helpful to me for my own preservation and well-being; so I must think it my indispensable duty to be loving, kind, tender, and forward to be helpful for the preservation of the life, health and well-being of my neighbor; as I would be pitied and relieved in distress, so I must pity and relieve others.

2. Next to our own lives, we are above all things concerned for our families, and especially our wives and children, and not only for their lives, but also for their chastity and fidelity. As therefore I would by no means have the lives or health of my wife, children

or servants endangered by others, I must for the same reason be tender of theirs. And as I should think it a horrid injury for any one to corrupt or even tempt the chastity or fidelity of my wife, son or daughter; so I should, for the same reason, abhor the thoughts of corrupting or tempting the chastity or fidelity of the wife, son or daughter of my neighbor. And in a word, as I should think my self prodigiously injured as well as them, to have either wife or children any way alienated from me, or misled into any error in opinion or wickedness in practice, or into any intemperance, debauchery, or dissolute living, I should account it a prodigious crime in me to tempt or mislead others in any of these respects. And what is here said with regard to our wives and children is by parity of reason applicable to our servants. If I should justly esteem it a vile injury to have my servants corrupted, or alienated from me or tempted to any instance of rebellion or disobedience, I must think it would be a like vile injury in me to lay any such temptation before my neighbor's servants.

Next to our families we are very tender of our estates and worldly interest, and therefore must be equally tender of those of our neighbor. Every man has a quick sense of property in what accrues to him either by the free gift of God's providence or by his own industry. He accounts it his own, and consequently has a no less quick sense of injury if he be, without just reason, deprived of it or any ways molested in the enjoyment of it. As therefore I am solicitous to have the unmolested enjoyment of what is my own; so I can't but be desirous that my neighbor would be careful of it; and consequently if I would have him be careful of mine, I must for the same reason be careful of his, and if I would have him render me my due I must make conscience of rendering what is due to him. I think myself grievously injured if he robs, steals, defrauds or any ways deprives me of my right; I must for the same reason think it a no less grievous crime in me to rob, steal, defraud, or any ways deprive him of his. Do I think it a great injury to me for my neighbor to neglect his inclosures, and suffer his creatures to trespass upon me and devour what belongs to me, and must I not think it an equally heinous injury in me to neglect my own inclosures and suffer my creatures to devour and trespass upon him? And with regard to dealing and commerce: do I think it an unsupportable wrong for my neighbor to be false to his word and

promise, to cheat, deceive or any ways overreach or oppress me in dealing; must I not for the same reason abhor to be false, deceitful or oppressive in dealing with him? Would I esteem it a barbarous injury for him to take the advantage of my necessity, or of my ignorance or weakness, to oppress or overreach me or mine by exhorbitant prices or demands in buying and selling; and can it be that I should dare to take the like advantage of his necessity or weakness to oppress him? Would I have my neighbor be exact and punctual in paying his debts to me according to agreement; can I then be negligent, or give myself any rest till I have punctually and faithfully paid my dues to him? Do I think myself much injured in being kept out of my just debts beyond a reasonable time of payment, and can I think it less injurious to keep him out of what is justly due to him? Do we think him a very injurious as well as foolish man, that by living beyond his ability, or by grasping at more than he can well compass, puts it out of his power to pay his just debts; and can we not make it our own case and think it would be equally wicked and foolish in us. And lastly, if we would think ourselves very ill used to have any one take the advantage of any querk in the law to oppress us or keep us out of our just due; how can we be guilty of the like base usage of others?

4. We do also put at least an equal value upon our good name and reputation, and must therefore think ourselves prodigiously injured by being deprived of it, if we have not by our own misconduct justly forfeited it. Are you then so tender of your own reputation, and ought you not to be equally tender of your neighbor's? Do you feel a quick sense of injury in being basely belied and defamed, and can you riot upon your neighbor's character, and give your self leave to talk at random concerning him? Can you be mighty forward at defending and proving and calling people at nought when your own character is called in question, and at the same time give your self airs in tattling, whispering, censuring, talebearing, and backbiting others? And can you think it much that people's mouths are open, and that they make free with your name, when you are continually bespattering theirs, and at the same time do not look at home and take care of your own conduct and avoid every thing that may expose you to be ill-spoken of or ill-treated by others. For if a man's ways please the Lord he will make his enemies be at peace with him.

5. And lastly, as to our liberty (*vitali aura charior*), it is a vast value we put upon that, and account it to be a mighty injury to be deprived of it, without having justly forfeited it. This is equally the case with regard both to civil and religous liberty. We justly think false imprisonment a most grievous injury, we should therefore abhor to inflict it upon others, or to take the advantage of any querk in the law for that purpose. In short, we always think ourselves injured when we are inhibited or interrupted in doing any thing that we lawfully may, and therefore are injurious whenever we break in upon the liberty of others. And as to religous affairs; as we have always a quick sense of injury when we are censured or any ways ill treated or persecuted because we cannot assent to what we believe to be false or do what we believe to be unlawful; so we ought never to censure, malign, or persecute others because they cannot come into our way of thinking or acting. As we desire a free and unmolested enjoyment of our own persuasion, so we ought not to molest them in the enjoyment of theirs.

And now to conclude, you see, my brethren, the vast importance and extent of this Golden Rule, and how it is founded in nature, and common sense, and results from the necessary relations of persons and things: how necessary it is to the peace and happiness of mankind and must therefore be the will and law of God, being indeed originally founded in his moral perfections. So that it might well be said, this is the law and the prophets, and I may add, the philosophers too, it having constantly been inculcated by all wise men among the heathen as well as Jews and Christians: and it is said that the Emperor Severus had such a veneration for it that he was wont to have it frequently in his mouth. How much more ought we Christians to have the most sacred veneration for it: we to whom the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness as well as ungodliness of men: we to whom not only the principle itself, but all the branches and consequences of it are so clearly taught, and on whom they are so strenuously enjoined: we to whom not only the most terrible punishments are threatened if we disobey it, but also the most glorious rewards are promised if we are obedient to it. Let us therefore live all our days in the most conscientious observance of all its holy dictates; this being so indispensably necessary in order to render us like God and partakers of the divine nature, and favorites of that righteous Lord

who can't but love righteousness, and to qualify us for the everlasting happiness of that blessed world wherein dwells righteousness forevermore.

Aug. 18, 1765. Stratford, Nov. 10, 1745. It. p. t., Nov. 20, 1748. St. Oct. 20, 1750. Fr. 1 Joh. 3, 7. Little Ch. let no man deceive, etc. T. Ch., Oct. 5, 1760. 1 part to p. 10 and p. *ult.*

A / DISCOURSE / CONCERNING THE / NATURE OF GOD. / FROM/ST. JOHN, EP. 1, I. 5. GOD IS LIGHT/and IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL. / BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, D. D. /PSAL. XXXVI. 9. In thy Light shall we see Light/ Designed as a Supplement to the New / System of Morality.[2] /

A Discourse on the Nature of God

1 St John, I, 5. God is Light, and in Him there is no Darkness at all.

St. John writes this Epistle to the Christians scattered abroad in divers parts of the world, to guard them against a sort of sectaries, supposed to be those called gnostics, which sprung up early in the church, who pretended to a vast deal of spiritual light and experience in the knowledge of God and the deep mysteries of Christianity, when at the same time they hated all Christians that were not of their party, and censured them as knowing nothing of true Christianity; besides that they lived in other gross instances of immorality; notwithstanding which, they pretended to the highest attainments in spiritual knowledge and acquaintance with God and Jesus Christ; yea, even to an intimate fellowship with them. But however so much light they pretended to, St. John tells them (c. 2, 9, 10, 11), he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in darkness, even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light; but he that hateth his brother walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth. From which words it appears, that by light and darkness, St. John means a good or evil moral state, as being of a benevolent or malevolent temper, and living a virtuous or vicious life. So that in St. John's style, love and virtue are light, and hatred and vice are darkness. And this is agreeable to St. Paul's way of speaking, when he calls good Christians children of the light, and all kinds of wickedness, he calls the unfruitful works of darkness. Eph. 5, 8, 11. And in Col. 1, 13,

[2] These last lines were crossed out in the manuscript. [The Editors.]

he calls their conversion, their being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. So that the kingdom of Satan which is a kingdom of wickedness, is for that reason called a kingdom or power of darkness, being set up in opposition to the kingdom of God: and the kingdom of Christ who is God's vice-gerent in his kingdom, and came to destroy the works of the Devil, is truly called a kingdom of light, being a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14, 17. And he says of himself, John 8, 12, I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. This good or evil moral state is called light or darkness, because he that lives a good life lives according to the light or knowledge of his own mind, and knows and considers what he does and for what end he does it, in all his conduct with regard to God and the moral world about him, in pursuance of his true and eternal happiness; this intellectual light or knowledge being fitly resembled by sensible light, which directs us how to live and act to good purpose for our present well-being in this sensible world; from whence therefore the metaphor is taken; whereas, he that lives a wicked life acts contrary to the light or sense of his own mind, and in effect knows not or considers not what he does, nor for what end, like a man that stumbles along in the dark, and knows not whither he goes, while he is continually making wrong steps and attended with uneasy and fearful apprehensions.

Now St. John being to write against those vain pretenders to light who walked in darkness, whose vicious and malevolent way of living was contrary to God and owing to their indulging wrong tempers and entertaining false notions, or conceptions of Him (as indeed all malevolence and wickedness arises from and is attended with misapprehensions of God), begins what he is going to say, with the words of my text: this then is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, as these people pretended, and yet walk in darkness, *i. e.*, in malevolence and wickedness, we lie and do not [speak] the truth: but if we walk in the light, *i. e.*, in benevolence and virtue, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with (Him and) one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. From whence it is plain, that when it is here said that God is light, the same thing is intended

with what is meant by that expression (cap. 4, 16) God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him. So that light and love, darkness and hatred, do, as I said, in St. John's style, signify the same thing; and the chief intention of this expression, God is light, is to express the moral character of God, for want of a right notion and just sense of which, it was, that these vain pretenders to light in the knowledge of Him, lived in malevolence and wickedness. It is therefore as much as to say, that God has a most perfectly clear apprehension of all that is true and right, just and good, and always invariably affects and acts conformably thereunto without any misapprehensions or misconduct at all, or any thing that savors of either weakness or malevolence: and therefore those that have right apprehensions of Him and are truly contempered to him, must be full of light and love; must be in their proportion all truth and benevolence, justice and charity, as He is, otherwise they in vain pretend to have any fellowship, any communication with Him.

Thus I have explained the meaning of these words as they stand related to the context; from whence it appears, that it is the moral character of God that is here chiefly intended. However, as the natural and moral attributes of God are closely connected, his infinite knowledge, wisdom and power, with his infinite holiness, justice and goodness; whereof those of the one kind consist in the necessary perfection and excellency of his nature, and those of the other in the most free and perfect exertion of his will and power conformable thereunto; and since the words, as I shall show, do naturally enough express both, as constituting one entire infinite perfection and rectitude; I shall therefore understand and explain them in their full latitude, as being excellently expressive of the true nature of God. And shall show in how many respects or upon how many accounts, it may be truly said, that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. In order to which I must observe that when it is said, God is light, it cannot be spoken in a direct literal sense, light being nothing else but an impression of sense made by Him upon our minds, by means of an inconceivably fine subtle ether, incessantly flowing from the sun, its grand source and reservoir. As therefore, we learn to think and speak of things spiritual by means of things sensible, it must be in a translated or figurative way of speaking that God is called light; and the expres-

sion is very appositely applied to God on these five accounts: as He is a most absolutely positive being, without any negation or privation; as He is the author of all sensible light and thereby renders Himself visible to us; as He is perfect intellect and the fountain of all intellectual light; as He is perfect activity, and the source of all active light and life; and as He is perfect holiness, justice, and benevolence, and the origin of all moral light and comfort. On which accounts it is probable that the ancient Persians called God, light, as being the fountain and author of all good and happiness; whereas the Evil Genius, who was the original of all sin and misery, they called darkness. But whether this way of speaking was derived from them, or that they and the Jews derived it from the same common ancient fountain, the original method of instruction used by God himself from the beginning (which is most probable), I shall not now inquire. This is certain, as I said, that light is admirably expressive of the divine nature on the five accounts above mentioned.

I. God is light as He is an absolutely positive being, without any negation or privation at all. Light, we know, is a positive or real being, obvious to our sight; whereas darkness has nothing real or positive in it, but is merely an absence, want, or privation of light. This expression therefore may fitly be understood to mean that God is entire absolute perfection or fullness of being, and that in Him there is no defect or want; nothing negative or privative; in a word no imperfection at all. Light pervadeth and filleth everything wherever it comes, insomuch that there is not the minutest part of any transparent body that does not appear full of it, and by it all visible things become visible to us: and therefore does very fitly represent God, as being absolutely positive and fullness of being it self and by whom all other things exist. All that is real in them or that can be called truly being or perfection they derive from Him, portioning out such degrees and measures of it, as he thinks fit, with an endless variety, and they entirely depend upon him for it, and for every moment of the continuance of it. They might not have been at all, or in such a degree of being as they are, if He had not been pleased of his own mere motion to give it to to them: and they must of course cease to be or to be what they are if he should cease to will their existence, or their subsistence on their present state; so that they are wholly precarious and dependent beings. On the contrary, He exists absolutely by an intrinsic

necessity and perfection of his nature, and can't but be, and be what he is, since all other things depend upon his will and power, without whom they could never have been at all, but He upon nothing, and would have existed and been just what He is if they had never had a being. So that they are wholly in his power, and are limited as pleaseth Him, whereas He is absolutely out of the power of any being to limit or control Him. He, therefore, being of Himself an independent necessarily existent being, must have all being, reality and absolute perfection in and of Himself, and being out of the power of any being to limit Him, can have no limitation or imperfection at all, and consequently must be All in All. Hence it is evident that actual existence must necessarily be implied in his essence, which can be the case of no other being whatsoever. For of all other beings it is easy to conceive that they might not have existed, but of Him who is the first cause and original of them it cannot be conceived but that he must necessarily exist; otherwise nothing else could ever have been, and the very notion or conception of his existence must necessarily infer that He is.

Hence it is that God was rightly styled, by the most ancient philosophers, the TO 'ÓN, *i. e.*, the *being* by way of emminency, as containing in Him all that truly *is* or exists absolutely. For we and all other creatures exist only conditionally and comparatively. We exist only conditionally, *i. e.*, on condition of his willing our existence: and only comparatively, as our being and every perfection of it, is limited and consequently imperfect compared with his unlimited perfection and excellency. He therefore, alone must exist absolutely or necessarily, *i. e.*, independent of any act of his own will; for every act of his will must suppose his existence. This term which so anciently obtained among the Gentiles is of the same import and probably was derived from that name which God gives Himself in the 2nd of Exodus. 14. *I am that I am,* which is the most emphatical and expressive that can be; for He only can absolutely say *I am* and in saying that He says all; all that perfectly and absolutely *is*; all that is perfectly intelligent, wise and powerful; all that is entirely just and equitable, true and faithful; all that is truly good and benevolent, merciful and beneficient. In a word, all that is absolutely fair and amicable. All the good properties that go by these names among his creatures, are but shadows of these perfections which are original and substantial realities in Him, or rather one entire reality diversified only in our low con-

ceptions. In them they are light mixed with shade; light mixed with a great deal of darkness; but in Him they are pure perfect light without any shade, or any darkness at all. And of the same import with that name, *I am*, is the name *Jehovah*, only the first He uses when He speaks of Himself, and the other signifies *He is* and is used when he is spoken of in the third person. He is that He is: He is all that truly *is*: He is All in All. And if you put them both together it is as much as to say, *I am he* that truly *is*. And this is as much as to say the infinite, eternal and unchangeable being. The word infinite seems to be a negative term, and it is grammatically so, by reason of the scantiness of our language and conceptions. But it is indeed expressive of what is most positive, of which finite is truly the negative.* For He that says, infinite, expresseth being absolutely as comprehending all that *is*: whereas He that says, finite, denieth that what he speaks of comprehendeth all that is, and limits it to but a part, and perhaps a very small part of what truly is, and the same is eternal with regard to what is only temporary, and unchangeable with respect to what is only fluctuating and unstable. Time has a beginning and proceeds in a successive duration, of which one part was and is not, another is and was not, another is not but shall be. This is the case with the creatures, but cannot be the case with Him who *is* invariably all at once, the TO NVN or Eternal Now, and all the various successions in his creatures, their past, present and to come, are at once present to Him, who is always one and the same; who is light and the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Thus God is light, an infinite, eternal and unchangeable light, and in Him there is no limitation, no succession, no variation; in a word, no darkness at all.

Hence he is necessarily one and but one; for all perfection being united in Him, he can be but one; for more than one, in each of which is all possible perfection, implies a manifest contradiction. And succession and variation imply multiplicity, and consequently want of perfection, and accordingly all creatures are more or less various and manifold; but so it is not with God. He is absolute fullness of being, and perfection itself, and consequently a perfect unit without any multiplicity at all. And as unity, so truth is likewise an expression of this same absolute perfection and fullness of

* See the Archbishop of Cambray's Demonstration. p. II.

being which is here called light. For truth is the same thing with reality or a thing's being considered as being what it really is, and therefore the more reality or perfection there is in any being the more truth, and perfect or entire reality is perfect truth, excluding all that can be called false, defect or want; for false is the defect or want of truth or reality: and so far forth as any being, (which is the case of all creatures,) falls short of perfection, so much it wants of truth or reality, and so far it is negative and may be said to partake of darkness. And lastly, good is another expression of this absolute perfection or fullness of being which is here called light: truth and good mean the same in divers respects: it is truth as it is intelligible, and good as it is eligible: and so far forth as there is any want of any possible perfection, so far forth it is less eligible. Therefore God is the chief good, as all possible perfection or excellence is at once united in Him, without any evil or defect, or the want, abatement or absence of any good, *i. e.*, any thing that relates to the happiness of Himself or any other being depending on Him, and consequently He must be perfectly eligible. The creatures may be said to be good, so far forth as they have all the properties and perfections that they ought to have according to their several natures and ends, *i. e.*, in proportion to their usefulness or happiness. But their goodness is only limited and comparative, as they fall infinitely short of God's absolute, or infinite goodness and perfection, concerning whom it is said, "The heavens are not clean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels with folly, and there is none good but One, that is God," for so far as there is any want of good there is a mixture of darkness. Thus, as God is absolute and perfect truth and good, without anything negative or defective, it may upon this account be truly said that He is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

II. But, secondly, God may be said to be light, as He is the author of all sensible light, incessantly impressing it on our minds, and thereby rendering himself, and every thing else visible to us. The Psalmist, very elegantly says, (Ps. 104. 2) He covereth Himself with light as with a garment which expression implieth much the same notion of God, with that ancient saying of the Persian philosophers, that light is his body and truth is his soul. We have seen that God considered as intelligible is truth itself, as He comprehends all reality or perfection, or entire fullness of being, and as such he cannot be an object of sight. But he hath made himself

visible to us by means of sensible light in all its various modifications, in which his infinite wisdom, power and goodness are perpetually displayed before our eyes in endless forms, whereby they fall under the notice of our minds. Now as the soul is properly the person, so God truly and properly speaking is truth and excellency. And as the soul of man is not an object of sight, but we become visible to each other by means of our bodies; so God is not an object of sight but becomes visible to us by means of sensible light, wherewith he does, as it were cover himself as with a garment, so that light is to God, in effect, what the body is to us: it is the medium by which He becomes sensible to us, as by our bodies we become sensible to each other. The sun is the great source and fountain of this sensible light, in which God exerts his mighty energy or force, by whose incessant and almighty activity it is perpetually flowing forth and with inconceivable swiftness, reaches to the utmost bounds of this sensible world, and by it he is continually impressing our minds with the sight of himself and everything about us, and as it were constantly speaking to us, and directing us in all our actions, where we should go and what we should do, for avoiding what is hurtful and attaining what is beneficial for our subsistence and well-being. Wherever therefore the light shineth, and whatever it be that is thereby rendered visible to us, it is God that really as it were is couched under it, and perpetually acting in it and by it, with an infinite variety, giving both light and life to every thing else. So that we may with propriety say that God is light, in the same sense as we say, such a man is fair or white: we do not mean this of his soul or spirit, which is properly the person, and can have no color, or be anyways the object of sight; but we mean it of that sensible medium, his body, by which he becomes known to us. So God is light, as He thereby continually impresseth our sight and so becomes known to our minds. For that it must be so is evident, because we know that we are merely passive in all the impressions of sense which are manifestly conformed to most wise laws and rules, of the most beneficial that can be; we must, therefore, be continually surrounded, affected and wrought upon by an infinitely wise, kind, and active being, who must unavoidably be ever present with us.

And wonderful it is to think of it, if we will but seriously consider, that God is thus everywhere present with us in every object of sense, tho' not in the same manner, as really as we are present

one with another by bodily presence. This should affect us with a most serious sense and dread of God, wherever we are and whatever we do, He being a constant witness and spectator of all our actions, and indeed of the innermost thoughts and affections of our hearts, and we accountable to Him for them. Carnal unthinking men, immersed in flesh and sense, scarce believe there is a God, or at least, think little or nothing about Him because he is not an object of sense. They are apt to say, if they could but see God as they do an earthly prince, how ready should they be to fear and adore him? But alas! if they would but seriously reflect and consider; it is but to open our eyes, and we do as truly behold the great Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth gloriously displaying Himself in all the various modifications of light, as ever we behold an earthly potentate. For what do we behold when we see a king? * Not the spirit or soul which is properly the person, and which cannot be an object of sense: we see only the shape and color of a man clothed with gorgeous robes. In like manner we cannot see God as he is a spirit, and as such, invisible, but we see Him as truly as we see a man like our selves, but more manifestly than we can see any mortal man. We see Him in every shape and form, in all his works, throughout the whole creation, in all which he is everywhere present, clothed with light as with a garment, whereby he renders Himself conspicuous to our eyes, and indeed he makes Himself felt by all our senses. We should moreover seriously consider, wherever we are and whatever we behold, that it is God who by means of the sensible light of this world, renders all things visible to us; and wherever we go, and whatever we do we should bethink ourselves, that it is God who surrounds us with light and directs us in all our steps, and how to act with advantage in all our exertions. For this sensible light in all its infinitely various modifications, has the nature of a kind of universal language, whereby our good God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and who is the author of all nature, an ever watchful and ever active spirit, is continually, as it were, speaking to us, and making all other sensible things known to us and directing us in all our ways. So that with respect to this sensible light, it may be truly said that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. For all sensible darkness is only in us, and is owing to a mere negation or privation of

* V. Berk. *Princ. Hum. Knowl.*

light, *i. e.*, to his withdrawing or witholding the impression of it upon our minds, according to certain laws of nature which he hath established. Not but he is otherwise equally present with us in the dark as well as the light: for whither can we go from his spirit or whither can we flee from his presence? The darkness hideth not from him, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light to him are both alike.

III. And thirdly, God is light as to his intellectual perfection: *i. e.*, as He is perfect intellect and knows all things, and is the fountain of all that intellectual light and knowledge that is in our understandings. For what the sensible sun and light is to our sight and the sensible world about us, the same is God, who is truth itself and all the emanations of truth that flow from him to our understandings and the intellectual world within us. Therefore it is that light is many times put for knowledge and darkness for ignorance in a figurative or metaphorical way of speaking. So that in this sense God may be truly said to be light itself; for He is perfect intellect, and in Him are hid, and from Him derive, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. His infinite all-comprehending mind does perfectly and at once comprehend every thing that is and will be; all that is future and all that is possible; all things are at once present with him and perfectly known to Him, and in Him there is no darkness at all; nothing whereof he is or can be ignorant. Known to Him are all his works; the whole series of ends and means; the whole concatenation of causes and effects; the whole vast drama of providence from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things; all are at once, from eternity and to eternity, subject to the view and under the direction of his boundless intellect and almighty power. He not only knows all our outward deportment and behavior but he looks into the bottom of our very hearts, and sees the inmost thoughts and designs, and the most secret tempers and affections of our souls. His eyes behold and his eyelids try the children of men: He searcheth all their hearts and tryeth all their reins, and there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves. Of such boundless extent is the knowledge of God! And of equal extent is his power! The one extends to all things intelligible, the other to all things possible! It is higher than Heaven, what canst thou know, deeper than Hell, what canst thou do; the measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader

than the sea. O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me, Thou knowest my sitting down and my rising up, and understandeth my thoughts afar off: Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways, neither is there a word on my tongue, but lo, O Lord thou knowest it all-together. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to Heaven, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. What manner of persons then doth it concern us to be in all our conversation before him, both in the tempers of our hearts and the conduct of our lives, for in Him there is no ignorance, no darkness at all, and all things are open and naked in the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

But as God is thus perfect intellect, knowledge and light itself, so it is from Him that we derive all the knowledge that enlighteneth our minds. Without Him our minds would be mere darkness, and we should neither see nor know any thing at all. So that with regard to understanding as well as sense, it may be justly said, that He is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world: His light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. But tho' we do not perfectly comprehend it, yet so far as our little capacity will admit of it, it must be truly said with respect to both, that it is in his light that we see light. He hath given and preserves to us our reason and understanding, which rendereth us capable of knowledge, and it is by a perpetual intercourse of our minds with Him who is the great parent mind, that we are enabled to understand any thing at all that occurs to us, from the moment that we begin to exist. This is the light of reason and conscience; the candle of the Lord that shineth within us. For there are certain self-evident universal maxims of truth which are necessary and eternal, that are the tests and standards by which we judge of everything that comes within the compass of our thoughts. They are such as these: that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time; nothing can act that is not; there can be no effect without a cause; the whole is bigger than either of its parts and equal to all of them taken together; things equal to another must be equal among themselves;

what is right or wrong in another towards me, must be equally right or wrong in me towards him. These, and many others of the like kind, are principles of eternal and unchangeable truth that would have existed if we had never had a being; do exist independent of any created mind, and are the self-evident principles of truth that do enlighten every created mind, antecedent of its judging of any particular thing, and do, as it were, stand by, and are ready at hand to our minds, enabling us to judge rightly of everything to which we apply them. I do not mean that our minds are created with these truths in them, or that they antecedently exist in our minds after the manner of so many distinct propositions as here set down; but what I mean is, that, the great parent mind, in whom these principles of truth exist, does, in a manner which I am not able to explain, as it were, impress our minds with a sense of them, and thereby enable them to judge of every particular thing that occurs to us. That the case must be thus, or something like it, I know not how to doubt when I consider that truth cannot exist or have any meaning without a mind perceiving it. As sure therefore as there are eternal truths independent of their being perceived by us, there must be an eternal mind, necessarily existing independent of our minds, which on the other hand, must, by necessity of their nature, depend on that, both for their existence and intelligence. These truths must therefore exist originally in God's eternal mind, and consequently demonstrate his existence. In his eternal mind they are one pure light of truth, but are diversified in our narrow conceptions according as we are able to apprehend them. If it be asked how we come by the apprehension of them — I answer: it is plain that we do not receive them by sense, nor are they the creatures of our own minds, since they exist necessarily independent of them. We find we are merely passive in the reception of them; as passive with regard to them, as with regard to sensible light; so that we can no more withstand the conviction of the one, than the impression of the other. They must therefore both equally derive to us from the perpetual activity of Him in whom we live and move and have our being, impressing them upon our minds. The light of eternal truth shines in upon our understandings as the light of the sun does upon our eyes, and enables us to understand God and all other intelligible things, just as the sun enables us to see himself and all other sensible things. It is therefore plain that all intellectual light

from God affecting our minds as all sensible light is from the sun affecting our eyes: or to speak more exactly, God, by these rays of eternal truth deriving from Himself and impressed upon our minds, enlighteneth our understandings, as by the rays of sensible light flowing from the sun, and impressed on our minds by his almighty activity He enlighteneth our sight. So that, as I said, it is by a perpetual intercourse of our minds or understandings with the Deity, the great parent mind, the father of spirits, that we are enabled to understand and know everything that comes within the compass of our knowledge; either by sense or reflection — as by sense we behold the sensible light shining in upon our minds from without, and enabling us to see sensible objects; so by reflection we behold this intellectual light shining in upon our minds from within and enabling us to understand intellectual objects, and at the same time to discern the various connections and relations between the several objects of both kinds. As by means of the one we perceive by sense; so by means of the other we perceive by reflection and reason; but both are equally from the same fountain and father of lights. Thus it appears, with regard to this intellectual light as well as the other, that God is light, and from Him all the light that we have in our minds, is derived to them, in various measures as he thinks fit, while in Him there is no darkness at all; and that whatever darkness there is it is in us alone, having only certain measures of his light communicated to us, as pleaseth Him.

IV. God is light as to his active perfection, *i. e.*, as He is perfect activity, and the source of all active light and life. And he may truly be called light in this respect, since all the natural life of the whole creation derives from the vital force and efficacy of the rays of light incessantly flowing from the sun. For all the fertility of the earth; the various different natures of metals and minerals; the life, growth, and all the various sapors, odors, and medicinal qualities of vegetables, and the life, growth, vital warmth, spirit, sense and motion of animals; in short, all that spirit, pervading and giving life and action to all sensible nature, is, with good reason, ascribed immediately to an infinitely subtle, active ether, continually flowing from the sun, with which the sensation of light is constantly connected with all its endless varieties. For tho' strictly speaking, light is only the immediate object of sight, yet since that is constantly connected with and is supposed to be

derived to us by means of this fine elastic ether, therefore this is also called light. In this sense, therefore, light does fitly represent Almighty God, who is an infinitely active being, and the source and author of all life and activity, not only in the vegetable and sensitive, but even in the whole rational and moral world: for in Him is life, and this life is the light of men, as St. John teaches. The truth is, that it is God, who not only gave being to this subtle spirit or vital ether, flowing from the sun, which we call light, but who, himself, incessantly acts in it, and by it, in all its exertions, and in all the life, force and activity it communicates to all his creatures. It is that which seems to be, as it were, the life and soul of the whole sensible world, and by some has been so called. But it is indeed He, who is truly the life and soul of that without whose perpetual energy it could effect nothing. Agreeable to this notion, the Psalmist, in the 104th Psalm, having given a most beautiful description of all the works of nature, which he no less philosophically than devoutly, describes to the perpetual agency of Almighty God, he concludes it with a language taken from the sun's departing in the winter, and leaving all things in stupidity and death, and returning in spring with fresh vigor, life and beauty, which he thus applies to God. Thou hidest Thy face they are troubled, thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit and they are created: Thou renewest the face of the earth. As therefore this light, ether or spirit is the grand medium by which God continually exerts his infinite force and activity in all nature, it very fitly serves to represent Him, who is truly light in this sense, being all life and activity, and in Him there is no darkness, no death, no intermission of life and activity at all. Thus is God the life of the sensible or natural world: but he is no less truly the life of the intelligent or moral world; the world of rational and self-active creatures. As from his light we are enabled to reason and understand; so it is from his life and power, that we are enabled to exist, act and exert ourselves. It is He that holdeth our souls in life: neither are we able of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but all our sufficiency is of God. It is true He has given us, not only a principle of consciousness, reason and intelligence, but of liberty, activity and self-exertion. But, as our minds in understanding, depend on the light of his eternal truth communicated to them, by which they are enabled to reason and judge of every

thing about which we think; so it is, by a perpetual intercourse with his all-active spirit, that we are enabled to act and exert ourselves with advantage in every thing that concerns our well-being and happiness. The manner in which we depend on God in all our activity, we are not able to explain: but that we are entirely dependent on him in all our exertions, we are perfectly sure, because we know that we cannot continue to exist or act a moment longer than he pleases. Indeed we are intuitively certain that it is we ourselves that act, and are entirely free in so doing, however so dependent we are in him. It is not, therefore, in a mere passive manner that we are acted by him. He acts with regard to all his creatures as being what they are: as therefore all sensible things are merely of a passive nature, they must be passively acted by him. But as we are intelligent beings, and of a self-active nature, we must be treated as such, and must therefore be rather said to be assisted than acted. We have indeed something passive as well as active in our nature: and so far forth as we are assisted, we are confessedly passive: but our actions are nevertheless our own and free, tho' we perpetually act in all that is morally good under the influence of his assistance, for without him our strength is weakness: so that all our springs are in him, and He is all in all: and it is our greatest glory to be dependent upon him, who is all light and life, and in him there is no darkness, no weakness at all.

V. And lastly, God is light as to his moral perfection; as he is perfect holiness, justice and benevolence itself, and the perfect pattern and original of all that is holy, just and good among his creatures. The moral perfection of God consists in the perfect rectitude of his will, always invariably choosing and delighting in, and doing, every thing that He knows is fit, right and reasonable in all his conduct towards his creatures: from whence must necessarily arise infinite complacency and happiness, or infinite satisfaction in all that He knows, chooses and does. And this state of being is also in a figurative or metaphorical sense called light, and those that imitate or resemble God herein are for the same reason said to walk in the light and are called children of the light and of the day, as those that live in wickedness and consequently in confusion and horror, and dark and fearful apprehensions, are said to walk in darkness and to be children of darkness. He that knows he does what is right and good, knows what he does and the rules he should act by, and approves of his conduct, and takes

unspeakable satisfaction in what he does, like a man living and acting in the open light, who knows and takes pleasure in knowing where he goes and what he does and that he is safe and successful in it: whereas the wicked stumble on in darkness, confusion and horror, like a man that is blind or destitute of light, not knowing what he does nor where he is going, and is full of fearful apprehensions. So that these two different moral states are as I said before fitly resembled by light and darkness; and from men they are applied to God, whose perfect moral excellency is perfect light and in him there is no darkness at all; no impurity, iniquity, malevolence or guilt; none at all, as there is in us, more or less, who are so far forth partakers of darkness. These moral perfections in God are one entire moral rectitude of will, without any variety or diversity, consisting in a steady disposition and inflexible resolution as I said, to do all that is fit, and right in all his conduct towards his creatures. But tho' it is one entire moral perfection in Him, it is diversified in our narrow apprehensions, and imperfect manner of conceiving it, according to the differences of the objects whereon it terminates. As it acts in the utter abhorrence of all sin and wickedness, and in being devoted to all that is just and good, it is called holiness. As it acts in treating every person and thing as being what it really is, and in rewarding or punishing in exact proportion to the good or bad qualities or behavior of his creatures, it takes the denomination of justice. As it acts in an invariable consistency with itself and with the reality of things, in all the discoveries He makes of his mind and will, it is called truth. As it acts in doing good and bestowing favors upon all his creatures in various measures as pleaseth Him, it is termed goodness. And, as it acts in relieving those that are in necessity or misery, it goes by the name of mercy. So that, as the light of the sun is one as it is in Him and flows from Him, but as it is reflected from various objects it displays itself in various colors, red, blue, green, etc., according to the different natures or textures of the several bodies from which it is reflected to our eyes; so the perfect moral rectitude of God is entirely one in Him, and becomes various under the several names of holiness, justice, truth, goodness, mercy, etc., according to the different lights in which we consider it as terminating on the creatures according to their several different qualities. And as we view it in the several objects, it appears to our narrow minds as it were mixed with various shades, but as it

is in Him, it is pure light and no darkness at all. For tho' clouds and darkness are round about Him, according to our imperfect and partial apprehensions of things, with regard to the present dispensations of his Providence, yet we always may, and must depend upon it, that one pure, unmixed light of justice and judgment is the habitation or stability of his throne, and that He who is the great judge of all the earth, will not, and therefore cannot, because he will not, do any thing but what is right and good: and being conscious to himself that he always does every thing that is right and wisest and best in the whole, He can't but take infinite satisfaction and complacency in all his proceedings, transactions in the government of the world. So that He is, in all respects pure and perfect light, and in Him there is no darkness, no error, no wrong, or misgivings at all.

INF. Hence it follows, that so far forth as we do imitate the moral perfections of God, and so become partakers of the divine nature, *i. e.*, so far forth as, according to Christ's instructions, whom God sent to enlighten and reform a dark and degenerate world, we do, by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, become holy as God is holy, pure as He is pure, righteous as He is righteous, merciful as He is merciful, and in one word, perfect as He our Heavenly Father is perfect, so far forth as we walk in the light as He is in the light, and then truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, we are one with Him and He with us. We choose what he chooses and delight in what He delights in, our tempers and wills being united with his; and in this case, we can't but take unspeakable satisfaction in feeling ourselves at one with Him, who is our chief good; in feeling a blessed harmony and consistency both within ourselves, and between Him and us and one another: and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin: from whence must result a peace which passeth all understanding, and a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But alas! our clearest light has a mixture of darkness: our best moral state is attended with much weakness and imperfections, and in many things we offend all. How dark and dismal then must be the unhappy state of those who are the reverse of God's moral perfections, whose hearts are alienated from His purity, holiness, justice, truth, benevolence and mercy, and have indeed contracted an aversion to them, and are become enemies in their minds by wicked works, and because they do evil they hate the light, and

come not to it lest their deeds should be reproved; who wallow in all manner of sensuality and impurity, and are guilty of injustice, oppression, deceit, ill-nature, cruelty and inhumanity, and hate to be reformed and cast God's words behind their backs, and who, in consequence of these things, must know that they are God's aversion and abhorrence, and that He is angry with them every day, and that they are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath: from whence they can't but be filled with perpetual horror and fearful expectations. All such wicked men may be truly said to walk in darkness, and to be children of darkness: and as they go on in the ways of confusion and darkness here; so they must expect to be cast out into utter darkness hereafter, even the blackness of darkness forever, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; for such is the nature of things as well as the appointment of God, that if we will be wicked we must be miserable.

Let us then resolve, while we have the light that we will walk in the light. And since God has sent his blessed Son and Holy Spirit to enlighten and renew our souls, let us diligently attend to the instructions of our Blessed Lord, who came down from Heaven to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel; to recover mankind from that miserable state of darkness, error, wickedness, and guilt in which they lay involved, and so lead them to the right knowledge of God and conformity to Him, and thereby to bring them into a state of reconciliation with him, in a word, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sin and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified through the faith that is in Him. Let us then, according to his instructions, love, adore, and confide in God's fullness and all-sufficiency, and choose and delight in Him as our chief and sovereign good. Let us consider that all our springs are in Him, and look to derive all good from Him in whom are placed all our happiness and all our hopes. Let us seriously attend to the light of reason and conscience and set God ever before us, and be concerned above all things to approve ourselves to Him and be qualified for his favor in Christ, which is better than life, by endeavoring to have our hearts and wills united with his, and our whole behavior conformed to Him: particularly, let us diligently imitate his moral perfections, and be followers of God as dear children, and be as like Him as ever we

are able in all holiness, justice, benevolence, and mercy, and see to it that these things be in us and abound, and so cause our light to shine before men, that others beholding our good works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven. For if we persevere faithful to the end, making what proficiency we can in these heavenly tempers, and practices, we are truly children of the light, and our path will be like the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, when we shall be advanced to the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of God, and to see Him as He is, who is light itself, and in whom there is no darkness at all.

July 6, 1746; May 10, 1747; July 28, 1767.

A SERMON / CONCERNING THE / INTELLECTUAL WORLD / [Text in Greek] / In Advent 1747. /

On v. 7, Adv., 1749. Adv., 1751, p. t. it. v. 7, 1753, West Chester. Adv., 1764.

A Prospect through Sensible Things into the Intellectual World

2 Cor. IV. 18. While we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The chief point which the Apostle has in view in this Epistle is to vindicate himself against the aspersions he labored under from those false teachers who were for blending Judaism with Christianity; and because he endeavored to vindicate the liberty of Christians from the yoke of the Mosaic law, which they were for imposing upon them, especially those from among the Gentiles, they did all they could to discredit him and his ministry, and to render both his person and labors contemptible. In order therefore to do himself justice, he is obliged tho' with great reluctance to say many things of himself and his proceedings in a manner, which otherwise might savor of boasting. And among other things he is here speaking of his great labors and sufferings in the cause of the Gospel, and asserting his sincerity and disinterestedness, and explaining the views upon which he acted, having no eye at any motives or considerations taken from this visible and transitory world, but being solely governed by the views of the invisible and eternal things of the world to come. For which cause, says he, we faint not, v. 16, but though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. And what those are he goes

on to explain more particularly in the next chapter. For we know, says he, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, v. 1, etc., etc., v. 10. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, etc. So that the certainty of another life after this, and the account to be given of ourselves to God, and these apprehended by the eye of faith, as not being objects of sight, are the unseen things which he speaks of in my text under the influence of which he faithfully labored to fulfil his ministry; for as he had said, v. 7, We walk by faith not by sight, which words do in effect import the very same thought with those in my text.

Now the principles upon which the Apostle tells us he acted are those upon which it concerns us all, and all Christians, as such, in all ages and nations, always to act in all our deportment, throughout the whole course of our lives, *viz.*, to look through things seen and temporal to the things which are unseen and eternal, and to be principally governed by them in all our conduct. For this is the grand business and design of the Gospel, to acquaint us with intellectual objects, to inure us to them that we may chiefly be governed by them. We are born children of flesh (3 John), time and sense, but are designed for immortality, and for a spiritual intellectual and eternal happiness, and consequently by the discipline of the Gospel into which we are brought by baptism, to be gradually disengaged from sensible pleasures and transitory engagements, which must shortly cease of course and to be trained up to the exercises of reason faith and virtue to place our happiness in the things which are entirely of another nature, things spiritual, intellectual, stable and eternal. We consist of a sensible and rational or intellectual nature in strict union with each other. We begin with sense, and from thence are to take our rise to the objects and exercises of reason and faith, and so gradually go on to that highest spiritual and moral perfection for which we are ultimately designed which is the perfection and happiness of our better part, our rational and immortal nature. Now the Gospel is the great engine to raise us above the objects and pleasures of sense, which are those of our animal nature, with which we begin, and to lead us on to that spiritual and moral perfection which is the happiness of that reasonable and immortal part of our nature; that when we have done with this sensible and transitory state, we may be qualified for that intellec-

tual and eternal happiness, for which we were ultimately designed. This is an affair of that vast importance to us, that God thought fit to send his son into this world upon that very errand to establish a most excellent institution to disengage us from this present world, of sense and time, and recover us from the many errors we had fallen into, and the guilt we had contracted by our too great attachment to sensible things; to open and ascertain to us the views of the intellectual invisible and eternal world, and to train us up to those spiritual, intellectual and moral exercises and practices that would fit and qualify us for the everlasting happiness thereof. It is therefore my design from this text to trace out the method of this heavenly institution, the Gospel, in accomplishing this end. In order to which I must a little more particularly define the terms of the text.

By the things seen are meant all the objects of sense signified by those of the most comprehensive and pleasing sense of seeing, which according to the style of the Hebrews, is put for all the senses. This expression therefore, comprehends all the objects, pleasures and enjoyments of our present animal state. The objects and pleasures of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, the objects of which senses constitute what we call the whole natural world, and the gratification of them implies all the pleasures of sense. These are designed for a very good end, *viz.*, to direct and employ our active powers for attaining an agreeable and comfortable subsistence while it should please God to continue us in this present state, which is our first entrance into being, and a state of childhood and discipline in order for a more mature state which may be called a state of manhood in another life after this, which is to endure forever, when we come to be perfect men in Christ Jesus. And in this state we are to take our rise from these sensible things, and gradually learn the exercises of reason and faith and the practices of holiness and virtue in order to our being qualified for that more perfect state of being. And the chief of our discipline in this immature state consists in not suffering these objects of sense to hinder or interrupt the more noble exercises of reason, faith, and virtue, but rather in making them subservient to those purposes. Our heavenly Father deals with us in this as we do with our children. He gives us these sensible things as baubles and playthings to divert and amuse us while we are children. But as a wise and good parent contrives the

diversity and amusements of his children so as to make them the means of exercising and improving their minds and their active powers and training them up by degrees to things more manly and of greater importance, pleasing and improving them at the same time. So our Heavenly Father gives us these sensible things, the things of this world, so to subsist, please and divert us, as that at the same time they may be means of exercising and improving our reason and our active powers, and gradually perfecting them, and thereby fitting us for that more perfect state of being in the life to come. And as our present state is to continue but for a short space of time, so these sensible objects and enjoyments are but transient and temporal. The things which are seen are temporal. As this world is not designed for our perpetual abode, but only for a short state of discipline, so these things which are seen, these sensible objects and amusements are fitted for such a transitory state, they are only of a temporary and transient nature. They are perpetually fluctuating and changing, and in a little time they are to cease and be no more.

But the things which are not seen are eternal. Where by the things which are not seen, are meant the objects of pure intellect, of the mind and understanding, of reason and faith, in opposition to those of sense and imagination, and they are objects of quite another kind from the others. We are apt to think these objects of sense the only real solid stable things, and that these things unseen are only mere notional airy things, and the men of this world are wont to consider them as mere phantoms, and whimsies; whereas in truth they are the only real, firm, stable, and unchangeable things and the others are, compared with them, but little better than shadows. Now what are these things unseen, these objects of intellect, reason and faith? I answer they are, in the first place, God, the being of beings in whom is all reality, all perfection and excellency, from whom all things else have all that they are and have, and on whom they all depend. He is absolute real being itself, and all other things are in effect but the shadows of being, compared with Him, as they merely depend upon the incessant exertion of his will and power. He is all knowledge and wisdom, all power and goodness, all holiness, justice, truth and benevolence. He is the life and support of the whole creation; in a word, He is All in All. In the next place, among these invisible things, are our own souls and all other intelligent beings, which so far forth partake of the Father

and Fountain of all being, and perfection, as to be intelligent, free, active, beings, as He is, and to be capable of resembling Him in holiness justice and goodness, and by his decree, will and power shall always exist and never cease to be or to be happy, in proportion as they resemble Him and be obedient to Him, tho' they must be otherwise unavoidably miserable. And lastly to these invisible things must be reckoned the whole conduct and management of Almighty God in the government of the world, and particularly with regard to his rational creatures in rewarding or punishing them according as they behave themselves, and all the great principles of truth, justice, equity and benevolence on which the whole conduct of his government is founded, and more especially the whole economy of his grace in the dispensation of his Gospel with regard to the sinful race of mankind, by his blessed son Jesus Christ, for their recovery from sin and death and restoration to his image, favor, and immortality. These are the things, which being not seen, being not the objects of sense but apprehended by the faculties of reason and faith, are of a stable, eternal and unchangeable nature.

My method therefore in treating on this subject shall be to open to you the invisible world, and to represent to you more particularly those spiritual eternal and invisible things which the Gospel recommends to our chief concern, and to show under each head how God designs by sensible to lead us up to spiritual things, and to teach us not to look upon, not to rest in, or be too much pleased with the things which are seen and are temporal, but through them to look forward, and to be chiefly delighted in the things unseen represented by them, which are eternal. And

1. The first, and chief unseen intelligible and eternal object of our reason and faith to be here considered, God, the sovereign and chief good, who is all in all. We are placed here, in the midst of a glorious sensible scene of visible things, a world which is truly amiable, and beautiful, and may in some sort be said to be the image of the invisible God. Everything is so far beautiful and amiable as it is pleasing, useful, and advantageous to the reasonable and intelligent nature, to its real happiness or enjoyment of itself in the whole of its nature, and duration. This world therefore is beautiful and amiable as it subsists and pleases us while we continue here in our present state, but (as we are reasonable and immortal creatures) more especially as it represents and leads us

to the eternal God, our chief good. It subsists us while we are here, and everything at the same time contributes to our pleasure and comfort; but as our animal nature is but short lived and very uncertain, while we consider it only in this light tho' it is so far forth valuable and we ought to give God thanks for it, yet it must be considered as a very fading and transitory thing. It is therefore designed that we should consider it in another light, that we should look on it, as at the same time to look through it and look beyond it. That we should consider it as not only a means for the subsistence and pleasure of our bodies, but as a means for the instruction and improvement of our souls, by leading us to the acknowledgement and adoration of that glorious being who is the Author of it, and at the same time the true father and former of our immortal spirits and their sole, their chief and sovereign good. Because as they are immortal, so He is a being who is eternal and unchangeable.

Now therefore what the Gospel requires of us is not absolutely to disregard these visible or sensible things, as being what they are; for in the view wherein I have represented them, they are to be regarded, but comparatively (according to the genius of the Hebrew language) to make light of them, *i. e.*, in comparison with God and the spiritual Heavenly things represented by them, according to the Psalmist in the 73rd Ps. where he says, v. 25. 26. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee? My flesh and my heart faileth, but Thou O God, art the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Let us then according to the Gospel consider this visible world chiefly in this view, as an emblem of things invisible, and a means to lead us by reason and faith to the sight of God our great, our chief good. For according to the Apostle's philosophy in the 17th of Acts, v. 24, etc., God hath to that end made the world and all things therein, and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, that they should seek the Lord, and that they might feel after Him, and find Him whose offspring they are, and in whom they all live, move and have their being. For, says he, Rom. 1, 20, the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. Let me then from the visible things before our eyes, direct you to

look to the invisible things of Him who is the Father and Lord of all things. Let us consider the objects of our sight as leading us directly to Him who is invisible. We know they are effects produced in our minds whereof we are not the cause and yet nothing that is an effect can exist without a cause. The Father of Lights, therefore must be the cause of all that light that is let into our minds, and consequently of all the objects of our sight. We certainly find that light and all these visible objects serve to guide and direct us in every thing that it concerns us to do for avoiding things hurtful and procuring things advantageous to us; we must therefore conclude that the great and good author of them designs by them to guide and direct us in every thing that concerns us, and consequently is ever present with us in them, and ever watching over us and speaking to us and directing us in everything that concerns us thereby enlightening our eyes from without us, while He enlighteneth our minds within us. Can we then behold the sun in the firmament every day, by his light incessantly flowing from him opening to our view the whole visible world about us, in all which we behold innumerable and inimitable displays of wisdom unsearchable, of power ineffable, and of goodness immense, and by which we are continually directed in all our actions, and in the management of all our affairs, and by his heat and influences pervading and perfecting all its productions, being as it were, the life and soul of the whole creation. Can we, I say, thus daily behold him without considering him as representative of that infinitely more glorious being who is truly the author of all his light and heat and all his sweet influences, who being every where covered with his light as with a garment perpetually worketh all in all? Can we look upon him with an eye of sense, without looking beyond him and through him with an eye of reason and faith to the eternal and invisible God, who is the father of the intellectual world of spirits, as the sun is, as it were, the father of the sensible world of bodies? Do we not behold and in some sort, feel the Deity in the light and heat of the sun, thrusting himself upon us and forcing a sense of himself upon our minds, and fitly representing his coeternal Son and Spirit, the light and life of our souls?

And when we have thus been looking outward upon the things that are seen, can we not then turn the eye of our minds inward and there behold the same invisible Father of our spirits enlightening them from within, enabling us to discern the various relations

and connections of things both sensible and intellectual? For instance, between causes and their effects, subjects and their accidents, wholes and their parts, things equal and unequal, like and unlike, agreeing and disagreeing, diverse and opposite, etc., from which intellectual apprehensions we are directly led to a sense of true and false, and of right and wrong, and are conscious to ourselves when we know the truth or are deceived, and when we do well or ill, and enjoy unspeakable satisfaction in the one and uneasiness and remorse in the other. In all which cases do we not find there are a great number of necessary and eternal truths, and duties which force our assent, and of which we are intuitively certain, and our minds, are merely as passive to them as our eyes to the light of the sun? From which we are necessarily and directly led to the sense and acknowledgment of that necessarily existent and eternal being, from whom all intellectual or spiritual light perpetually flows, irradiates our minds, as the sensible light of the sun irradiates our eyes. And the more we consider and contemplate the eternal God and eternal truth thus discovered with the eye of our mind, the more sensible we shall be of his reality and stability, and of his immutability and eternity, and consequently that he is our sole and supreme good, and the more firm and stable we ourselves shall be in adhering to him and our duty while we endure like Moses as seeing Him who is invisible and the more indifferent we shall grow towards the things which are seen, which we find to be perpetually fluctuating, unstable, and temporal, and the more we shall admire and love this invisible being, his infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power, and his infinite holiness, justice, and goodness, while we keep the eye of our faith fixed upon these things which are not seen, but are unchangeable and eternal.

2. And in the next place, while we are thus considering these things that are seen and from them arguing and proceeding to the invisible God, we naturally proceed further to reflect and consider ourselves; that perceiving, thinking, and active being, which we call ourselves; our souls which are properly our persons, whereof these bodies of ours are but mere sensible representatives and engines. By these it is that we perceive all these things, that are seen, while they themselves are among the things that are not seen. By these we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell, and become acquainted with all visible and sensible things, and by these we go on and reason from these things that are seen to the spiritual intellectual

and eternal things that are not seen. By these we not only know things visible and invisible, but are conscious of our own existence and all our faculties, of all our enjoyments, and all our hopes, and by these we are able to look forward to eternal ages, and not only see that we may, but be convinced that we must subsist forever, and fare well or ill according as we behave ourselves in this life. These immortal souls of ours, being not objects of sense any more than the Deity, the father and former of them, we scarce know how to reckon them, as well as Him, among real beings. They seem to our weak minds such airy, fleeting (fugacious) beings that we are sometimes almost tempted to doubt of their existence, independent of these gross tangible bodies. Whereas if we would accustom ourselves to withdraw our thoughts from the things that are seen and raise them as much as we can above them, we might soon be convinced that their existence is so far from depending on the existence of the body (that on the other hand, the existence of body depends entirely on the existence of mind, and that its existence can have no sense or meaning in it separate from its being perceived and acted by mind: and consequently that) it is these bodies that are really the empty uncertain, unstable fleeting (fugacious) things, and that it is mind soul or spirit, that is the real stable and certain thing. Bodies are the things seen which are temporal, and minds are the things unseen which are eternal. What are all the objects and pleasures of sense but mere fleeting, fugacious, unstable and uncertain things, I had almost said, but mere imaginary things, and but little better than dreams? Whereas the objects of reason and faith and the pleasures and joys that attend them, with the conscience of being governed by them, in delighting in and acting what is reasonable, fit and right, on all occasions; these are solid, stable, durable things; which the wise man calls durable riches and righteousness. And so with regard to the pains of body, and mind, he says the spirit of man may bear his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear? The pains of sense are indeed many times great, but by how much the greater, by so much the shorter, but the remorse of conscience from having done ill, is a most insupportable anguish; under the other we may have peace, a peace that passeth all understanding, if we do well and trust in God. But under these we can have no peace, no ease, nothing but horror and vexation, unless we turn about and alter our conduct, and return to what is fit, right, and our bounden duty. This abun-

dantly speaks the reality and stability of our souls, our reason and consciences and their spiritual and peculiar interests. Thus, as St. John says, The world passeth away and the lusts thereof; the things that are seen are temporary, fleeting, and transitory, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Doing the will of God, *i. e.*, what is reasonable, fit and right, with all the satisfaction and joys attending it, is a stable thing and can never fail us; the things that are not seen are eternal.

And such as these souls of ours are, such we must conceive all others to be; what we find their natures and interests to be, we must unavoidably conceive to be the nature and interest of all other intelligent beings throughout the universe, reason and intellect being in the nature of them in general everywhere the same. We find here a vast number of them of this family upon this globe of ours. And by analogy from what we find here in the various gradation of creatures below us, and the mighty extent and variety of the works of God which come within our ken, we may reasonably conclude, and by faith we must believe, that there are multitudes of other tribes and innumerable other creatures of the same intelligent active nature with us, many of whom may be vastly more perfect than we in the same faculties and powers that we have, and others may have faculties and powers of a higher kind and of much greater perfection than ours, tho' agreeing in the same general intelligent active nature which we are furnished with. But be they ever so numerous or ever so various, they must all be alike the creatures of God and all alike subject to his universal dominion and government; all of his family and household, of whom the whole family of heaven and earth are named. He is the one King and Lord of all, and they all constitute his one universal Kingdom, and must be reckoned among the things not seen which are eternal.

3. And lastly, to these unseen things which are eternal, must be also reckoned, the whole conduct of Almighty God in the government of the world, and especially of his intelligent or rational creatures. Verily, Thou art a God that hidest thyself, says the prophet. It is the unseen God that continually works all in all, behind the curtain, in all the productions of nature, as we commonly call them, tho' strictly speaking they are truly the operations of his almighty will and power, giving them being, actuating all their motions, and making them answer their several ends in their subserviency to the subsistence and well-being of his reasonable crea-

tures, which are more properly his own offspring, whose happiness is his greatest care. And it is the same invisible God, their great common Father and Lord, who governs and presides over all his offspring, his whole family of heaven and earth, pursuing that great end of their being, their true happiness by all the dispensations of his providence towards them, and by all the instructions, laws and injunctions he gives them, and the various pleasures or pains he causes them to meet with. Indeed as these creatures of his are a visible system, sensible to each other, and their social life depends upon a sensible intercourse with each other, he hath rendered himself visible to them in the glorious person of his Son, whom he hath established his visible representative and vicegerent in the government of the world; not only men, but angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him, and accountable to him as their head, lord, and judge. But tho' his person be visible yet his government is purely of an invisible spiritual and intellectual nature, as it is properly a spiritual and intellectual society, and their visible appearances to each other are only sensible means of conveying to them the notices of each other's invisible persons. The laws of this spiritual and eternal society or kingdom, are entirely of a spiritual nature, being designed to govern our hearts as well as our lives and actions, to regulate our thoughts, appetites, and affections, and direct all our actions in relation to spiritual objects, God, ourselves and one another. They prescribe the spiritual and eternal laws of humility, temperance, meekness, patience, and contentment in regard to ourselves, piety and devotion with respect to God, and justice and charity with respect to our neighbors, all which are spiritual exertions, and invisible so far forth as they are moral, *i. e.*, the free voluntary exertions of our souls, and done from a sense of duty to Him that made us. And lastly the sanctions to these laws are moreover of the spiritual and invisible kind. The pleasures or pains that will attend our obedience or disobedence which are intellectual and spiritual perceptions; the unspeakable spiritual joys and satisfactions that attend our being conscious of doing our duty and pleasing our God and securing our happiness, and the amazing horror and remorse attending the known violation of our duty, our reason and consciences, the displeasing God and exposing ourselves to his wrath and vengeance; these are the general principles upon which the government of the whole rational world must turn, and

which you see are all of a spiritual nature, not objects of sense or imagination, but of reason and faith.

And with respect to us men in particular, while we were in a state of innocence God taught us from the beginning to look through things seen to the things not seen; He made use of this sensible world as the visible means and emblem to lead us to the knowledge of Himself, and our duty and happiness. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was made use of to teach our first parents duty and sin, and to lead them to a sense of God's dominion over them, and the tree of life, to teach them that immortality and happiness that should attend their obedience, as their exclusion from it, if they were disobedient, would be attended with their death and destruction. As the others were natural, so these and all that follows were instituted visible means to represent invisible things. And when they had sinned and were expelled from Paradise, as God assured them of pardon upon their repentance, and that if they would yet do well they should be accepted, so he probably instituted the visible emblems of the cherubims, and sacrifice, to be means for instructing them in the spiritual invisible things of the Gospel, and to teach them to keep the way of the tree of life; *i. e.*, how to recover that immortality which they had lost by their disobedience.

This was the beginning of that whole series of dispensations which God used from that day to this in his conduct towards mankind, for their recovery, which all turn upon the principle in my text of looking through things seen to things unseen. The whole Mosaic dispensation, which seems to be a revival of, or at least founded upon those original visible emblems, the cherubim and sacrifices, a system of visible typical institutions, designed to represent and teach the future spiritual and invisible things of the Gospel. The cherubims were symbols of the divine presence exhibiting mercy to penitents. The sacrifices were types representative of the sacrifice of Christ, and emblems to represent the heinousness of sin, to induce the sinner to repentance, and ascertain pardon to the penitent. The priesthood was a type of the priesthood and intercession of Christ; circumcision of the flesh represented and obliged to the circumcision of the heart and the mortification of base lusts; the purifications of the flesh, to the moral purity of heart and life; the Passover was a type of the death of Christ, and the earthly of the heavenly Canaan; and so of the rest. In all

which they were taught not to look at those things, that were seen so as to rest in them, but at the things of the Gospel which were not seen, whereof they were shadows and emblems, which when Christ the body, the substance, the archetype came of course ceased and were done away.

Now the Gospel is the spirit whereof they were the letter, being the spiritual invisible things then not seen, but are, since Christ came, visible to us, being a vastly more spiritual dispensation than that of Moses. Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. And when we are admitted by baptism into the fellowship of Christ's religion, we are made free, of that invisible spiritual and heavenly society, the Kingdom of Heaven. We are come to the spiritual Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem. To an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to the Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to God the judge of all. By our natural birth we were born into this visible animal state, but by this spiritual birth, we are born into that invisible spiritual heavenly society. And yet even now we are still taught by the things that are seen to look further to the things that are not seen. From hungering and thirsting after bodily food, we are taught to hunger and thirst after righteousness; from the health and nourishment of the body we are led to understand the spiritual health and nourishment of the soul, and in all our Savior's discourses and parables, He makes use of temporal things to resemble and shadow forth to us the things that are eternal. And he has in particular instituted two visible ordinances fitted to the present state of his visible church, the one for a rite of our admission into it, the other for our improvement in it. Baptism or the washing of our bodies in water to represent and engage us to all purity of heart and life, and to seal the renewing and purifying influences of God's Holy Spirit, and the Lord's Supper to represent the body and blood of Christ and the spiritual benefits purchased thereby and to seal and convey them for their spiritual nourishment to all that receive with a truly penitent heart and lively faith and the heavenly temper of universal charity. In all which we are still not to look on the things that are seen, these visible ordinances, so as to rest in them, but by an eye of faith to look through them and beyond them to the spiritual things which are not seen that are represented by them. For what is faith but the substance of things

hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. This was the faith of all the ancient patriarchs from the beginning of the world and this is still the faith of us Christians, and in all our worship our prayers and praises, and in all the actions and conduct of our lives, without this faith of spiritual and invisible things it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh unto God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.

Thus my brethren I have explained to you as briefly and as clearly as I could the full force and purport of this text. Let us then rouse us and vigorously exert both our reason and faith to look through and beyond the things visible and temporal to the things invisible and eternal, and so to realize them to our minds, not only as things of the most stable substantial reality, but also as of the greatest importance to us, who are shortly to quit this short-lived sensible scene, and to enter into the eternal invisible world. Let us enter into it as far as possible beforehand by the frequent exercise of reason and faith that it may have such a powerful influence on our hearts and lives as may qualify us to be eternally happy in that eternal invisible state, while we look not at the things which are seen. Which God of His infinite mercy grant through Jesus Christ.

Rip. Advent, 1747. Darby Ascension, 1748. Ascension Pemb., 1749.

A / SERMON / ON THE / BEAUTY OF HOLINESS, / IN THE / WORSHIP of the / CHURCH OF ENGLAND. / BEING / A very brief Rationale on the LITURGY. / Preached at Stratford in Connecticut, and at the opening of Christ's / Church at Guilford. / By SAMUEL JOHNSON, D. D. / Sometime Missionary from the Society for Propagation of the / Gospel, etc. Now President of King's College at New-York. / Holiness becometh thy House, O Lord, forever. Ps. xcvi. 6 / Cujusvis hominis est errare, nullius nisi insipientis in errore perseverare. Cic. / New-York / Printed and Sold by James Parker and Comp. at the / New Printing Office in Beaver Street, 1761.[3] /

Advertisement

Having lately published a small tract on the reasonableness and importance of the great duty of prayer, and a diligent attendance on the public worship (which, I thank God hath been attended with some good effect); it was thought advisable, as a sequel to that, to publish this short rationale on the excellency and beauty of our public Liturgy. And I beg leave, as a testimony of my good will, to recommend it to the attention of the good people of New England, and particularly of Stratford, to whom I administered for above thirty years; and also of West-Chester to whom I officiated for a considerable time, and those of New-York, by whom I have been kindly accepted and treated as their lecturer for seven years; that they may with the better understanding and affections offer up their devotions, in the public use of this excellent Liturgy; being truly

Their affectionate friend and servant in Christ,

S. J.

King's College,
May 25, 1761.

[3] Two manuscript copies of this sermon are dated April 30, 1749. [The Editors.]

Of the Beauty of Holiness in the Worship of the Church of England

Psal. XCVI. 9. O worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.

It is a common mistake which hath too much prevailed in these times, and in this country, and that even among some well-meaning people, that they seem to account the hearing of sermons, to be the principal and most important and edifying part of the public worship of God. Hence, as it is very likely that some, heretofore, left the Church under the notion that they could elsewhere meet with what was then, though with very little reason, called the most powerful preaching; so others may have conformed to the Church, principally from being sensible (especially in the late times of confusion) that the doctrines of Christianity were more truly, more purely, and in a more instructive manner taught in the Church than out of it. In which they indeed judged very rightly; and this was, among others, a very good reason for their conforming to it. And as this was the principal occasion with many, of their coming over to us, so it is not unlikely that there may be some, with whom the worship of the Church, after all, may seem but tolerable for the sake of the doctrine, and they may not, even yet, have any high sense of the excellency of it, and its vast preference to the extempore way.

On the other hand, it is very probable, that there are but too many of those who have been bred up, and lived all their days in the bosom of the Church, and in the use of its public worship; who, partly by reason of the commonness of it, and partly their negligence, and for want of giving a due attention to the propriety and excellency of every part of it; may not be sufficiently sensible what a pearl of inestimable price they enjoy, nor duly thankful for it. As they daily breathe in the air, and enjoy the sun, and the beauties and fruits of the earth, without being so deeply sensible of these wonderful favors and blessings of Providence (by reason of the commonness of them, and their own strange incogitancy) or being so affectionately thankful for them, as the vast worth and importance of them do most reasonably deserve and require.

What I aim at therefore, in the following discourse, is to awaken us all, both of the one and the other sort, to a just sense of the intrinsic worth and excellency of that method of worshipping God

our Heavenly Father, which we are so happy as to enjoy in the Church of England; that we may be affectionately thankful to his kind providence for so ordering things as to give us the inestimable advantage of it: that we may give the stronger attention to the propriety and usefulness of every part of it; and that our souls may be filled with the greater devotion and edification in the use of it; as being sensible that we do truly worship God in the beauty of holiness, and are under the greatest advantage of growing up in holiness and comfort thro' faith unto eternal salvation.

It is indeed an unspeakable advantage that we enjoy by the preaching of God's Holy Word, and particularly in this excellent Church, in that we have it explained to us in the clearest and most intelligible manner, and that according to the original simplicity of the Gospel: that being freed from human schemes and devices, we are set at liberty from all those idle, absurd and groundless notions of God and the Gospel, which, both tend to give us hard and unworthy apprehensions of the Father of Mercies, and to make his Gospel (the plainest and best thing in the world) a mere unintelligible riddle, almost void of common sense; and at the same time, to weaken and enervate its most powerful motives to the utmost vigor and activity on our part, and to discourage our earnest prayers and endeavors by filling us with endless doubts and fears, and dark surmizes and despondencies. For in the Church we are led to attend to nothing but the plain language and meaning of the Holy Ghost; and have all the most salutary doctrines, precepts, promises and threatenings of the Gospel so clearly set before us, and the way of our duty and the road to everlasting happiness made so plain, that he that runs may read, and the wayfaring man though a fool cannot err therein. This I say, is an unspeakable happiness, and we ought to prize it beyond gold, even the finest gold, and to taste a sweetness in it beyond that of honey, and the honey comb, and make conscience of diligently attending upon it; but yet strictly speaking, preaching is not to be considered as being properly a part of the public worship, but rather as an appendage to it.

For the proper notion of worshipping God, consists in praising him for all his benefits, and praying to him for whatsoever we want both for soul and body, and in devoting ourselves to his true and faithful service. In all which we do, as it were, converse with the great father of our spirits, and have the nearest intercourse with

him that our souls are capable of; and consequently should put the greatest value upon it, as the principal end of our meeting together at the House of God; and that we may openly and jointly do all the honor we can to him our common heavenly Father. So that if there were no sermon at all, we should go together to the public offices of prayer and praise, with not a whit the less zeal and forwardness; forasmuch as our business there, is, not to hear any new thing, but to do our duty to our great creator, and benefactor; especially since the reading of God's Holy Word is a great part of our public worship, and that, vastly preferable to any human composition or preaching whatsoever.

Let us then learn to value things in proportion to the real worth of them, and prefer the worship of the Church for the solid intrinsic worth and importance of it, before any the most eloquent preaching. Whereas, I doubt, if there were no preaching, or none very good, there are many that would hardly think it worth their while to go to church merely to worship God, though that is by far the most valuable and important part of our public service. And we ought to account it a very great advantage and excellency of our Church, that her public worship is always the same, and equally excellent, even the best in the world, howsoever indifferent the capacity or abilities of the minister may be, considered as a preacher. In order therefore that we may highly prize it, and make a serious and conscientious use of it, and think ourselves very happy in it; I proceed, from the words I have read, to explain and point out to you, the real worth and excellency of it; and in conformity to it, call upon you all, as I truly may, in the words of the holy Psalmist, O! Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.

King David was one of the greatest patterns of true devotion that ever lived, as well as one of the best composers of public forms for the right exercise of it. And it is to be remarked that his admirable compositions have stood the test of time, and been constantly used both by the Jewish and Christian Church, as forms of public worship, for at least 2750 years, which abundantly speaks the excellency of them. We indeed can use only a translation of them, and that we use, may (chiefly through length of time and alteration in our language) need a few emendations; and those that know the original, are very sensible that no translation can come up to the noble simplicity and grandeur of the original lan-

guage. However the translation we have, generally carrieth in it such an inimitable majesty, and intelligible simplicity, that no modern compositions can be compared with it. I say this holy king was one of the greatest patterns of devotion that ever lived.

For though the materials for devotion then were much short of what they are now, under the more clear Christian dispensation; yet he seems to have had such a spirit of devotion, as put him into a kind of rapture at the thoughts of it. I was glad, says he, when they said, come let us go up to the House of the Lord, etc. And again, one thing have I desired, and that will I seek after, that I might dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple. And, Lord, says he, I have loved the habitation of thy House, and the place where thine honor dwelleth; and again, one day in thine house is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness; for the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield, and he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. And as his soul was thus full of the spirit of devotion, which indeed appears every where in his psalms, so he takes occasion from innumerable and various occurrences to express it in these his divine odes. And never was zeal and generosity like his in providing for building the house of God, and in framing and establishing orders for the decent administration of the public worship, as appears from the latter chapters of the 2d Book of Samuel, and the first Book of Chronicles. And it is plain from this Psalm, compared with that admirable hymn in I Chron, xvi, given out on occasion of his establishing the public worship, in which these very words are contained, v. 29, that it is the public worship regularly established, that he means by the beauty of holiness. We find these words also in the 29th Psalm, which was doubtless made upon occasion of some remarkable thunder storm, wherein he doth in a most sublime manner, celebrate the majesty and glory of God, displaying itself in thunder, which he elegantly calls the voice of the Lord, addressing himself to the great people of the earth, and calling upon them to admire and adore the majesty of the Divinity. Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty! give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord, the glory due unto his name, and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. And in this psalm, he does in the same

words call upon all nations, even the heathen, as well as his own people, to celebrate the glory of the great author of all things. After a general invitation to declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people, very likely with a prophetical view at the propagation of Christianity, he adds, For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised, he is to be feared above all Gods; for the Gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens; honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary; give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people; give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, bring an offering and come into his presence; O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him all the earth. From these words therefore, which thus appear to have been frequently used in the most ancient public worship of God appointed by David, and continued down through such a vast tract of time, I shall take occasion to explain to you the excellency of our worship in the Church of England; which follows the most ancient Church of God both Jewish and Christian, and many of whose forms are taken from the most pure and primitive liturgies, and which indeed, as Mr. Bingham shows,* obtained from the beginning of Christianity; being on many accounts the most pure and primitive church at this day upon the face of the earth. And as there are three things obvious in the text, *viz.*, 1. The Worship of God. 2. The Holiness of that Worship. And 3. The Beauty of that Holiness, I shall;

I. Show that in the Church of England we do most truly worship Almighty God.

II. That our worship is a most holy worship, and tends to promote holiness in the best manner. And,

III. That it is a most beautiful worship, and is truly worshipping God in the beauty of holiness.

I. In the Church of England we do most truly worship Almighty God. For worship consists in a most serious and solemn address to the great creator, preserver, and governor of the world; testifying from the bottom of our hearts our dependence upon Him, and submission to Him; praising Him for every thing we enjoy, praying to Him for whatsoever we want, and devoting ourselves sincerely and entirely to his service. Now all these things are abun-

* *Origines Eccles.*

dantly provided for in our forms, as I shall show you presently: and that in the best manner, which is certainly best done by public forms, established by lawful authority, and known and agreed to by all the worshippers. For how can I worship God with the full devotion of my soul, unless I have beforehand satisfied myself with what I am to offer up? And how can a worshipping assembly jointly and with one heart and soul, and with a full assurance of faith, offer up their prayers and praises to God, unless they have properly a Common Prayer, and are beforehand all satisfied that what is to be offered is both agreeable to the will of God, and suitable to their common necessities and occasions? And how can they otherwise offer up their public devotions agreeable to Christ's express instructions, who plainly requireth, they should be agreed touching what they would ask, as a condition of their receiving it? Mat. xviii. 19. If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. If there were a number of us to ask a favor of an earthly prince or governor, we should be very careful and exact in composing our address; we should take great care that it be well ordered, and that we be all fully agreed beforehand, both in the matter and manner of our address. How much more when we are to address the great God of Heaven and earth, and that for the life, even the eternal life of our souls, how fit and necessary is it, that we should accurately compose our address, and be beforehand well agreed and satisfied, both in the matter and manner of it; so as to have nothing to do when we come to offer it, but to offer up our whole souls with it, and make it our most devout free act and deed?

On which account though I would by no means uncharitably censure any, yet I must think that the best that can be said of the extemporary way used by our dissenting brethren, is, that it is indeed a very imperfect way of worship, and can never be justified. For as to him that offers it up, how can he perform it with true devotion, when he can scarce be said to be agreed beforehand with himself what to offer; and the chief force of his mind which should be employed in devotion, must be taken up while he is speaking, in inventing what to say, and how to express it? And it is much if he does not make some shocking blunders, besides the loss of his devotion. A great and good man,* who was an excellent judge in

* Mr. Wollaston *Rel. of Nat.* p. 124.

things of this nature, declared it his opinion, that a prayer is one of the most difficult compositions that a man can set himself about, to perform it with justness and propriety; meaning only in composing it beforehand. How surprising a thing then is it that any one can have the assurance to trust to unpremediated effusions on so serious and solemn an occasion as that of addressing the great and tremendous God? Who does, in effect, strictly forbid it, in Eccl. v. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God. For God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.

And then, as to the people who are to join in his prayer, how can they be agreed to join with it, when they know not what it will be? They cannot be agreed in it unless they have an implicit faith in their minister, like the Roman Catholics, so as to think him in some sort infallible. And indeed this was the original notion of what we call extemporary prayer. It was pretended that their prayers were immediately dictated by the Spirit of God, and therefore they must be infallible. But there are few, I trust now, that have such an idle notion of them; and how they should be so misled as to continue the use of them, I cannot conceive. For as they do not now pretend to be inspired, the people must consider after the minister has uttered each petition, whether they can agree to it before they can offer it up as their own act, without which it is no act of worship in them; and while they do this, he is gone along in his prayer, and they have lost what he hath been uttering in the interim; which demonstrates that this is a very ill-judged and confused way of worship, and so far from being a help, that it is a hindrance to true devotion, which accordingly seems in great danger of being lost among them; while they are apt to think it is the minister's business to pray, and theirs only to hear him, and not to pray themselves, and many are tempted to gaze about instead of praying.

But how happy are we, my brethren, who have a most excellent form prepared for us, by some of the wisest and best men that ever lived, and many of whom underwent the fire of martyrdom for what they did? I say, that we have, by them an excellent form of public devotion compiled for us, chiefly out of the Word of God, and conformed to it, in which, therefore, if we believe the Scriptures, we must be perfectly agreed and satisfied; so that when we come to worship God in public, we have nothing else to do but to

prepare our hearts, and give up our whole souls, and exert the utmost force of our minds and hearts in offering it up to our Heavenly Father; and so can with one mind and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as St. Paul requires, Rom. xv. 16. (which is scarcely possible in the extempore way) and which we plainly see to be a true method of worship, as it contains praises to God for every thing we enjoy, both temporal and spiritual and prayers for every thing we can want, either for soul or body, either for ourselves or others. Let us therefore be heartily thankful to God's good providence, that we have such an excellent method of public worship, and let us make a faithful use of it to the best purposes; in order to which, let each one have his Book, and keep it in his eye, the better to engage his attention, that avoiding all indecent gazing about, we may make it the business of our souls, in the House of God, to offer it up with the sincerest and most intense devotion, which we may the rather do, as knowing:

II. That our worship is a most holy worship, and tends in the best manner to promote holiness, both in our hearts and lives. And holiness becomes thy House, O Lord, for ever. Now holiness consists in being heartily devoted to God, so as to hate what he hates, and love what he loves; and in being concerned above all things to be conformed to his purity, righteousness, goodness and truth. As therefore God hates all sin and wickedness, that must be a most holy worship that testifies the utmost abhorrence of every thing sinful, wicked and impure. And as he loves all purity, righteousness, truth, goodness and mercy, that must be a most holy worship that tends to make us love and practise every thing that is pure and holy, true and righteous, kind and merciful. And as the love of God is the foundation of all religion and virtue, that must be a most holy worship that tends to inspire us with the supreme love of God, which will dispose us to do him the utmost honor, and make us like Him, and as obedient to Him as ever we are able. By these principles then let us try the worship of the Church of England.

1. And first, as to the negative part of holiness, which consists in hating and avoiding all sin and wickedness, which God hates; what can more effectually tend to this, than to begin with those declarations of holy Scripture, from whence we may abundantly learn the necessity of true repentance, the impossibility of pardon without it; and the assurance of God's pardon and mercy upon our true repentance? And what can better tend to this purpose, than

the excellent exhortation which the minister thereupon makes, to put us upon the exercise of such a repentance, by confessing and forsaking our sins that we may obtain mercy? And what can more effectually tend to make us abhor our sins and reform our lives, than to begin our worship with such a serious solemn act of confession of sin, and imploring God's mercy and pardon in Jesus Christ, as is expressed in that excellent comprehensive form, which our holy mother, the church, hath put into our mouths; upon which the minister is directed to declare God's pardon to every true penitent. By which she teacheth all her children, that if they would look for the acceptance of all their following prayers and praises, they should begin with such a solemn act of renewing their repentance, in order to obtain God's pardon and acceptance, without which their worship will be but mocking God. For if they regard iniquity in their hearts, the Lord will not hear their prayers; and if they persist in their wickedness, without repentance, their prayers, and all their services are an abomination to him. On which account I beseech you, as far as possible, to make conscience of coming in season, that you may have opportunity, by such an act of repentance, to secure your pardon, and the acceptance of your following services in the other parts of worship; and in order thereunto, to perform this confession in the most serious and truly penitent manner. And that you may be the more affected with it, you are wisely directed, every one, to repeat it with his own mouth, that he may make it his own act and deed, recollecting in his mind, with true contrition, his own particular sins and infirmities. And what is said of this, is equally true of the confession and absolution in the communion office. And as this must have the best tendency to make us hate and avoid all sin and wickedness; so the same is the design of those petitions in the Litany, wherein we pray God to deliver us from the power and guilt of all those sins that are there particularly named; than all which, nothing can more effectually tend to promote this part of holiness, which consists in hating and forsaking our sins.

II. And then secondly, as to the positive part of holiness, which consists in being devoted to God, to be like him, and that from a sense of duty, and in submission and obedience to his will; what can more tend to promote this, than all the other parts of our worship in their order? Particularly,

1. The Lord's Prayer, which is the most wonderfully comprehensive, and on every account the most excellent form of prayer that was ever composed in the world; and which our Lord hath made, as it were, the badge of his disciples. On which account it cannot be sufficiently wondered at, that any that call themselves his disciples, should not think themselves obliged in conscience to use it, since he hath expressly commanded us, when we pray to say, Our Father, etc., especially since nothing can more effectually tend to promote universal holiness, than the frequent and serious offering it up in our devotions. For therein we address God, as our Heavenly Father, which strongly teaches and obliges us to be his holy and obedient children. Therein we pray for whatever may tend to promote his glory, and our own best good and happiness, both temporal and spiritual. Particularly, we pray that we and all the world may hallow, or do all the honor we possibly can to his holy name, both by word and deed. That his Kingdom may come, and rule in all our hearts, which is a Kingdom of universal holiness, into which no unclean or unholy thing can ever enter. And that we on earth, may all, in everything, learn to do and submit to his holy will, as the saints and angels do in heaven, that we may be forever holy and happy with them. We next testify our entire dependence upon God, by praying for our daily bread, *i. e.*, for our preservation, and whatsoever is needful for our comfortable subsistence; which sense of our dependence is a great principle of true holiness. We next pray for the forgiveness of all our sins, whereinsoever we have been unholy in heart or life; and that we may be qualified for God's pardon, it must be supposed that we have truly repented of them; and we are here taught to testify our hearty forgiveness of others, without which we dare not look for forgiveness from Him; which is another great article of that holiness, in imitation of him, without which no man shall see the Lord. We then pray that he would keep us from all temptation, to every kind of sin or unholiness; and that he would save and deliver us from all evil; both the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment; both from the power and guilt of sin here, and the wrath and displeasure of God hereafter, that we may be secure of his everlasting favor. And lastly, in dependence upon Him, and acknowledgement to Him for all that we ask of Him, we ascribe unto Him, the kingdom, power and glory, for ever and ever. To which, as to all other prayers, according to the Scripture pattern

we add a joint vocal *Amen*. Than all which, nothing can more abundantly tend to promote universal piety and holiness.

2. Having made this entrance on the public worship of God, we proceed to the celebration of his praises in the psalms of holy David, and other devout hymns, taken out of the New Testament, and that admirable Christian Hymn called *Te Deum*, between the lessons; all which breathe nothing but holiness, devotion and purity. For they do either celebrate the glories, perfections and operations of God, in his wonderful works of creation, providence, or redemption; or express our sense of our entire dependence upon Him, and innumerable obligations to his infinite goodness; our abhorrence of every thing displeasing to Him, or our resolution to be in all things obedient to his will; or explain the duty and happiness of every virtue, or the baseness, perverseness and misery of every vice; or open the glorious views both of God's kingdom of grace, and his kingdom of glory, and teach us in the practice and experience of all those heavenly graces which are necessary to qualify us for an interest in the glories, and felicities thereof. These, and such as these, are the noble subjects of those sublime odes, all which are in effect, nothing else but universal holiness to the Lord. So that the Psalms are a most copious store-house of devotion, consisting of an endless and most beautiful variety.

3. After the Psalms, come the Lessons, taken out of the holy Scripture; and under this head, I may also mention the Epistles and Gospels, all being a variety of select and most instructive portions of the holy oracles, which are best adapted to instruct the people in the knowledge of divine and heavenly things, and to improve them in devotion and holiness: being all of them profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that not only the man of God, but even every Christian, may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works. For in them, either some article of faith, or rule of life is explained and inculcated; or some ancient prophesy, or some Gospel fact correspondent to it, or some miraculous operation, or remarkable providence, or example is set before us, etc., all tending to confirm our faith and hope, and to train us up in the blessed trade of holy living, for a happy immortality, which is the whole design and business of this heavenly school, the House of God; to which the public reading of the Word of God is so admirably subservient, that it is extremely

surprising that any Christians, for the sake of tedious long sermons, and extempore prayers, which are but mere human performances, should justle out the Psalms, and reading the Scriptures, except here and there a little scrap of them. This sure, if any thing may be called imposing the inventions of men in the worship of God; for I believe it may be truly said (with regard to many of their assemblies at least) that there are twenty times as much Scripture in one of our services, as in one of theirs.

4. Next to the Lessons, I may mention the Creeds as another part of our public worship, which also vastly tend to promote piety and holiness, and therefore ought by all means to be openly recited when we worship God. For as with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation. These Creeds are only brief summaries of the Christian doctrine, so that nothing can seem more strange than that any Christian should disapprove of them; and every article of our most holy faith, is either a motive or obligation to holiness. For what can more tend to make us holy, than to believe that we and all creatures in heaven and earth, do depend entirely on God the Father Almighty, for both our beings, and all we enjoy? What can more engage us to it, than to believe in Jesus Christ; his only Son, our Lord, who came into our nature, and taught us a most heavenly doctrine, and died a most bitter death, to kill the power and take away the guilt of sin; and arose from the dead, to confirm his doctrine, and ascertain our immortality, and that we might thereby be induced to arise to a new and holy life; and ascended into Heaven, that we might thereby be taught and obliged to mortify our earthly members, and set our affections on things above, where Jesus is at the right hand of God? What can better tend to make us careful of all our behavior, than to consider that we must give an account of ourselves to him, when he shall return to judge the quick and the dead? Especially if we consider further, that he hath sent his Spirit, which is the Spirit of Holiness, to enable us to mortify our lusts and passions, and to live as it becomes the redeemed of the Lord, and to be as it were the universal soul of his Church, and the fountain of all spiritual life to our souls? And how can we think of any thing but true repentance, faith and holiness, when these are the qualifications indispensably requisite, to give us a place in the holy Catholic Church of God, and to entitle us to the forgiveness of our sins, and everlasting

life, and happiness in his heavenly kingdom? Thus the repetition of the several articles of our holy faith still drive at the same blessed end, of promoting universal holiness; whether it be done in that short form of sound words, which is called the Apostles' Creed, as being a summary of the Apostles' doctrine; or in the Nicene Creed, which was agreed upon as a summary of the catholic doctrine, within 250 years after the Apostles' times, by a general council of bishops from all parts of the Christian Church; or in the other creed which was formed to bear testimony against the chief heresies, which infested the Church in those and the following ages.

5. Let us in the next place observe, that the same design of promoting all manner of holiness is the drift and tendency of all our prayers in our public offices, particularly the Collects and Litany. Every one of our Collects aim at promoting true holiness, either by praying for some particular grace, or deliverance from some temptation, sin or calamity. And as to the Litany (which word means a supplication) nothing can be devised or imagined more conducive to promote devotion and holiness, than that most excellent that most devout and comprehensive form of public devotion. For therein we pray, not only for deliverance from every sin and calamity, but also for grace to perform every duty; and we not only testify and exercise our devotion in praying for ourselves, for everything needful both for our souls and bodies, but also our charity for others, in praying for them, even for all men, whether friends or enemies; and at the same time we show our solicitous concern for the public weal, in praying both for the whole church, and for the king and all that are in authority, both in church and state, that under them we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty; and our tender concern for the distresses of our fellow Christians, in praying for all that are under any kind of affliction, whether in mind, body or estate. In a word, therein we pray for all orders of men, whether they be ministers of religion or justice, and for all conditions of men, whether they be in prosperity or adversity; so very particular and comprehensive are our supplications in the Litany, together with the prayers and thanksgiving annexed to it, both in general, and for a variety of particular occasions, so that it is scarce possible to conceive what the Church could have done more, that she hath not done, in providing for the public devotions; especially since she hath by the Canon allowed the

minister a discretionary liberty of expressing himself in the prayer before the sermon.

And under this head we may take notice of the wisdom and goodness of the Church, in the appointment of the several festivals and fasts, and in the provision that is made for them. In which, once in the course of every year, we commemorate each of the several steps of our Redeemer, in the restoration of mankind; his incarnation, birth, and manifestation to the Gentiles; his death, resurrection, ascension, and the mission of the Holy Ghost; for each of which, there are suitable prayers and passages, collected from the Epistles and Gospels. By which excellent method we are led in the course of each year to recollect ourselves more particularly upon each article of our most holy faith; and moreover the examples of the holy Apostles who propagated it through the world, and suffered martyrdom in attestation to it. All which do evidently tend to the advancement of piety and holiness.

6. The same may be also most truly said of our Communion Office. In which, what is there can more conduce to make us holy in all manner of conversation, than to have each of God's holy commandments rehearsed in a most grave and solemn manner, and for all the people, after every one of them, to pray for God's mercy to pardon their offenses against it, and his grace to incline their hearts to keep it for the future, and to write all his laws in their hearts? And, as the Holy Sacrament is the most divine and heavenly institution of our religion, and the most solemn act of our worship, the design of which is, to inspire our souls with a most grateful sense of the mighty love of our blessed lord and master in dying for us, in order to destroy both the power and guilt of sin; and to seal a pardon to us upon our true repentance, and fill us with the most ardent devotion to God and our Lord Jesus, and the most affectionate charity one towards another; so the manner of our administering and receiving it in the Church is excellent beyond that of any others. For which we are prepared, by a very suitable exhortation and confession of our sins, with the declaration of our pardon and the great and precious promises whereof this Sacrament is a seal. We are then called upon to lift up our hearts to God in the most seraphic form of thanksgiving, wherein the Church militant on earth joins, and, as it were, holds communion with the holy Church triumphant which is above; the angels and archangels, and

all the company of heaven; saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory; Glory be to thee O Lord most High. Amen. The elements are then consecrated or set apart to represent the body and blood of Christ, in the gravest and most solemn manner, with the words of our blessed Lord's institution; and in the administration the inestimable benefits of his death are expressed in the delivery of them, to each particular person, receiving them in the devoutest manner upon his knees; which is the most decent posture wherein to receive the seal of our pardon. And lastly, the whole office is concluded with devoting ourselves to God both in body and soul, in our Lord's Prayer and others, the devoutest prayers and thanksgivings, and ends with an excellent benediction; than all which, I must think nothing can be imagined more conducive to train us up in all holiness, devotion and virtue for the glories of the heavenly state. I shall, for brevity, add nothing here concerning the other offices of our public worship; and will only say, that whoever will consider them with candor and attention, will find them all, and especially those of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Communion, abundantly conduce to the same blessed purpose. Thus I have briefly showed that our worship is a most holy worship, as it abundantly provides for the promoting of holiness. I proceed now to show,

III. That it is also a most beautiful worship, and is truly worshipping God in the beauty of holiness, *i. e.*, that it not only every way conduceth to promote all manner of holiness, but that it doth it in the most beautiful and advantageous manner. For beauty consists in the fitness, proportion, variety and uniformity of things with regard to the end designed in them. Now according to this definition, which, I think, expresseth the true notion of beauty in all other things, our worship in the Church of England must be allowed to be most beautiful; particularly in the fitness and excellency of its language — the proportion of its parts — the variety of its matter — the uniformity of its manner — the gesture, voice, poetry, and music, all contributing to devotion and holiness.

1. Our worship is truly beautiful in its language, which is very weighty and expressive. It may, perhaps, be granted that in a few passages it may be capable of some improvement; but in general, this must be allowed to be the character of its language, that it carrieth a great force of weight with it, without either deficiency

or redundancy, and is in the happy medium between an affectation of verbosity and high-flown figures, on the one hand, and obscurity and dullness, and a low, vulgar meanness of expression on the other. It hath a grandeur and majesty in it, and at the same time, a most easy, natural, intelligible simplicity; always fitted to the weight and importance of the matter, and the capacities of the whole body of the worshippers. If it savors of antiquity, and on that account be thought not so polite to modern ears, yet this very thing giveth it an air of the greater gravity and importance, and there are but few expressions that are at all the less intelligible, though it is nigh 200 years old; and it adds much to its beauty, that it is expressed as far as it could well be, in the very language of Scripture, being an excellent collection from the very Word of God, which is ever full of majesty and grandeur. And as there cannot be a more decent and beautiful sight than to behold a great number of intelligent beings, the creatures and children of God, jointly conspiring to do all the honor they can to him their common parent, in their united adoration of him; so there is the greatest propriety and fitness in it, and consequently the greatest beauty, that they should worship their heavenly Father in his own language; in the words which he hath put into their mouths. If therefore we love the Scriptures, we cannot fail to love the worship of the Church of England, which is, for the most part, taken from them, and entirely conformed to them. But

2. It adds to the beauty of our excellent liturgy, that there is an admirable proportion in all its parts; insomuch that no one part is so swelled or enlarged beyond its measure, as to justle out or starve another. There is a just proportion of devotions and lessons, of prayers and praises, of confessions and deprecations, of supplications and intercessions, of petitions and thanksgivings, for ourselves and for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority, and for all orders and conditions of men. And as all these parts of worship, without deficiency or redundancy, are thus so exquisitely fitted and proportioned on to the other, so they all aim to an end, to which they are no less aptly fitted and proportioned, *viz.*, to advance the honor of God and the general benefit of mankind, and to promote universal holiness and righteousness among them; all which considerations abundantly speak their harmony and beauty. And

3. This beauty is further mightily improved by that graceful variety that appears among them, which renders our Liturgy like

a beautiful garden, wherein there is a delightful variety of luxuriant nature intermixed with curious art; of other various plants with trees; of fruits with flowers of divers sorts, all ranged in a various and beautiful order. In like manner, in our Liturgy, devotions are gratefully intermixed with lessons, and prayers with praises. The people's part is generally intermixed with the minister's, and short responses, in the form of ejaculations, with set and continued prayers, in which there is an agreeable variety, and the prayers are each of them short, in imitation of our Lord's Prayer; and there is a correspondent variety of actions of the body, suited to this variety of the exercises of the mind; all wisely contrived to keep the congregations wakeful, lively and attentive. This method is therefore vastly preferable to one tedious, long continued prayer, without any variety, as is the case with our neighbors, in which the people's attention flags, and they grow dull and heavy, and the force of their devotion is extremely weakened. On which account nothing should tempt me to exchange our beautiful variety of short devotions, for their long dull, and unvaried performances. For such is our frailty at best, that we need all the wise precautions imaginable to be used to keep our minds vigorous, wakeful and attentive, both by a variety of devotions and of bodily worship, which is the true intent of all that beautiful variety wherewith our worship is attended; and which, in proportion as it attains those ends, it may be truly styled, the beauty of holiness, But,

4. Tho' there is such a grateful variety in our method of worship, there is nevertheless a most beautiful uniformity therein prescribed, which if acted up to, would vastly add to the beauty and excellency of it; particularly in the uniform appearance and gesture of the body in the whole assembly, prescribed to each part of worship. This is made light of by many as a trivial matter, but herein they are certainly much in the wrong. St. Paul's reasoning is very forcible to show the necessity of bodily worship, in 1 Cor. vi. 20, where he tells us we are bought with a price, meaning our bodies as well as our souls, and that with no less a price than the blood of the Son of God, and therefore it is most fit and reasonable that we should glorify God with our bodies as well as our spirits, which are equally his; and of great use is bodily adoration. The eye is apt to affect the heart, and the liveliness and activity of our bodies naturally awakens and enlivens our minds. Hence the Church has wisely thought fit to direct and prescribe the notions

and postures of our bodies as well as the devotions of our minds, that as St. Paul directs, 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 26, all things may be done decently and in order, and for the use of edifying. Now the postures of the body I shall here mention are sitting, standing and kneeling: of these sitting is the farthest from betokening any thing like reverence or devotion. For which reason it is very strange that any Christians should use that posture either in prayers or sacraments, since according to the common acceptation of mankind, nothing is understood to be more disrespectful and irreverent, and therefore indecent and absurd. It is indeed not improperly indulged while we are in a condition of hearers and learners, as in the time of sermon, but utterly inconsistent with the condition of worshippers, in which case standing or kneeling was always used by the Church of God; and with good reason; because the posture or action of the body was ever considered as a kind of language expressive of the inward sense of the mind, and as such it is used in holy Scripture; where you observe that kneeling is always the posture of prayer, and standing the posture of praise; which we ought accordingly to observe, if we would express a due regard to that glorious almighty being whom we adore. For this reason our Church, according to Scripture, prescribes that we kneel at our prayers and stand at our praises. Since therefore beauty implies uniformity in the midst of variety, the beauty of holiness in the worship of God, must manifestly imply that according to the rules of the Church we should all act alike in one uniform manner. If then, there be not that beauty of uniformity in our worship that were to be wished, it is not because the Church doth not prescribe it, but because we do not act up to her prescriptions. What can be more beautiful than a well-disciplined army, where all look one way, all observe the same motions, all act alike with the utmost exactness, according to the word of command. Now what is a beauty there, would be equally so in the public worship, where, as well as in an army, all should be life and activity, uniformity and exactness, decency and order, as if one soul animated every body. This would be indeed to worship God in the beauty of holiness. Moreover,

5. As our worship would be entirely beautiful if the rules of it were observed as to the uniformity of gesture; so I must think it another great article in its beauty, that the people bear a uniform vocal part in it, insomuch that we do literally, with one mouth

and voice, as well as one mind and heart glorify God our heavenly Father. For as there cannot be imagined a more beautiful sight than for a large number of worshippers to join together in worship with one heart and voice, like children in doing honor to a common parent: so it looks like a kind of holy strife, in our method of joint vocal worship, who shall do the greatest honor to our common heavenly parent, while, keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, we do, as it were, call upon one another (the minister and the people interchangeably), and admonish one another in the short responses, and in the Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs, all with life and spirit chanting forth the high praises of God. I am sensible, to those who have been bred up in a contrary way, this method may seem at first to look like confusion; but let me assure those to whom it may so seem, that if they would only have each his Book, and see every thing with his own eyes, and come a little while into the custom, this objection would not only entirely vanish, but soon turn into the appearance of a very sensible beauty, and be found to be a solid advantage. For not only the eye, as I observed before, but also the ear would affect the heart, and it would not only animate a spirit of devotion towards God, but a spirit of charity towards one another, to find ourselves surrounded with our Christian neighbors and brethren, all joining together, and according to the pattern of the holy Apostles (Acts iv. 24), lifting up our voices with one accord in the prayers and praises offered up to Almighty God. My neighbor's voice will be so far from interrupting that it will rather animate my devotion, and give it the more life and spirit. This is what, I assure you, I find to be the case; and I believe I may appeal to the experience of all that have had an opportunity of coming into a habit of it. And let me farther assure you, that now after near forty years use of our excellent method of worship, upon this account, as well as the other reasons above mentioned, it is so far from growing tedious or a matter of formality, as some imagine, that every opportunity seems to add fresh life, and I see fresh beauties, and find further advantages in it from time to time. And one thing that makes it the rather appear so amiable is, that in the use of it I am offering up, not the devotions of this or that assembly only, much less of this or that particular person or minister, but the prayers and praises of the whole English church and nation, enjoined by lawful authority, and which every assembly is jointly offering up at the same time. And

moreover, that I find I am worshipping God according to the ancient Scripture method, wherein it was the manner for all the people to lift up their voice with one accord, not only in singing, but in saying their devotions. I find how this method was established by David, I Chron. xvi. 4 — 36, how it was continued by Ezra after the captivity, Neh. viii. 6. and ix. 5, etc. and still practiced by the Apostles in the Christian Church, Acts iv. 24. So in other places where we read how all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord, 2 Chron. vii. 3. Ps. cvi. 49. 1 Cor. xiv. 16. And as the Church militant, so the Church triumphant are represented by St. John in the Revelation as worshipping in the same manner, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, and their voice was like the noise of many waters. C. vii. 10 and xix. 6. Thus you see our method of worship is according to the most ancient Scripture pattern, and that in heaven as well as on earth. And methinks, as we would hope at length to join with the heavenly choir above, we should delight to worship God in this beautiful method while we are here on earth, for this you must plainly see is to worship him in the beauty of holiness.

6. And now lastly, I might, if there was room, add a good deal more upon the beauty of our poetry and music. As to the poetry of the version of the Psalms which we use, I must think it none of the least of the many beauties and excellencies wherein we have vastly the advantage of our neighbors, that we use such an excellent version, which excels theirs beyond all comparison. And in the harmony of our music we generally excel, and should do so much more, if we would more generally take a little pains to be versed in the tunes and rules of singing. And truly it is very disagreeable to see so many sit down with their mouths shut, when the rest are engaged in so beautiful and amiable a part of worship, than which nothing can more contribute to the promoting of devotion and holiness. How can it be, that any of you can sit as unconcerned spectators, while so heavenly and delightful a part of worship is carrying on; especially those of the fair sex, whose voices joined with ours, would mightily add to the beauty and harmony of this melodious part of worship; in which, methinks all should be active and forward to do what they can, and every one might do something in bearing a part in it. And if to our vocal, we add instrumental music; if according to the ancient Scripture method, we add organs to our voices, and if to both of

them we should add the sincere and intense devotion of our hearts, our worship would then be a very heaven upon earth, especially if we used the admirable chant of the Cathedral.

Thus I have endeavored to demonstrate, not only that ours is the true genuine worship, and that it is adapted in the best manner to promote devotion and holiness, but that we do truly worship God in the beauty of holiness. Let us therefore, my brethren, rejoice and give thanks to Almighty God for the unspeakable advantages we enjoy, and be zealous in our attachment to this our holy and beautiful worship, and be steady and diligent in our attendance on it. We shall be inexcusable if we neglect it, or are cold, formal, dull and lifeless in the performance of this so right and reasonable, so beautiful and amiable a service. And above all, let us take great care that we adorn our worship by living answerably to the mighty obligations it lays us under; since it is a most holy worship, let us be holy in all manner of conversation, for it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy. We have lately had an adversary * who pretends to show, as an argument against us, that where the Church prevails, all manner of wickedness prevails. But how groundless and abusive is it to reproach the Church with this, when, as I have abundantly shown you, nothing can more tend to promote holiness than our most holy worship, and nothing can more effectually tend to destroy the power of sin. If therefore sin does any where abound where the Church obtains, it must be ascribed to some other cause; and other causes enough there are to account for it, without assigning this; and particularly, propagating licentious principles. It cannot certainly be occasioned by conformity, but by teaching and acting in disconformity, and opposition to all the principles and rules of the Church. Let it therefore be seriously considered by every one whom it may concern, that a wicked Churchman is the most inexcusable of all creatures, for surely he is under much stronger obligations to holiness than any other Christian whatsoever. Let us then all resolve that we will confute this reproach by the amendment of our lives, and do all we can to adorn the religion we profess by the exemplary holiness of our behavior, and so cause our light to shine before men, that all that are about us may acknowledge that God is in us of a truth, and beholding our good works, may heartily join with us in glorifying God our heavenly

* Mr. Hobart.

Father. And lest by neglecting this pure and holy worship, we provoke him to abandon us, let us by no means forsake the assembling ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhort one another daily, while it is called today, least any of us be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin. And finally, as our eternal interest lies at stake, let us rouse up ourselves, and be all life and vigor in the performance of our parts of this amiable worship, that we may thereby make all possible proficiency in devotion and holiness; that being planted in the house of the Lord, we may grow and flourish in the courts of the house of our God, and bring forth fruit unto old age, even all the fruits of holiness and righteousness whereby our heavenly Father may be glorified, and our reasonable, active, and immortal nature, as far as possible, improved and perfected in all moral graces and heavenly virtues; so shall we be prepared, when God calls, to quit this present stage with cheerfulness, and bear a part with the blessed choir above, the innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, in all the glories and felicities of the heavenly state.

A SERMON / ON THE / ENTIRE DEPENDENCE / OF THE / CREATURE UPON GOD / From / 2 Cor. III, 5. [Text in Greek] /

Nov. 16, 1766. [Date of first preaching earlier — found at end of MSS.] 2 Cor. 12, 8. And he said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. July 14, 1751, and 1769. P. H., Sept., 1753. P. t. St., June, 1763.

2 Cor. III, 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

There is not any one point in the whole body of divinity, of greater evidence in itself, both from reason and faith, or of greater use and importance to us, for producing in us true humility and devotion, and consequently all other virtues, than a just sense of our entire dependence upon God. Upon this therefore I propose to discourse at this time, which I shall take occasion to do from the words of the Apostle which I have now read; which come in upon occasion of his vindicating himself from the aspersions of false teachers. In doing which he observes how little occasion he has of any testimonials in his favor, for that the success of his labors in converting men to Christianity, and particularly the Corinthians themselves, was a sufficient evidence of the truth, both of his doctrine and mission. Ye are our Epistles, says he, known and read of all men. Not that he ascribes his success at all to any sufficiency or ability of his own, but gives the whole glory of it to God, which he does in the words of my text: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God.

It must be confessed that the sufficiency the Apostle here speaks of was, at least, in a great measure of the supernatural kind: for we know that the great means of propagating the Gospel in those earliest times, were the extraordinary and miraculous powers that attended the ministry of the Apostles and other first preachers of Christianity, in the exertion or performance of which they were but mere instruments, and those powers were really none of their

own, but the immediate exertions of the Almighty power of the Spirit of God. So that with respect to them strictly speaking, they had no sufficiency of themselves, not so much as to think anything as of themselves, for all the doctrines they taught, which were peculiar to Christianity were immediately revealed to them by the Spirit of God, to which they were merely passive, and those notices or thoughts did not occur to their minds by means of the exercise of their own reason. But tho' these words may be supposed to intend primarily the revealed doctrines they taught as well as the miracles wrought in confirmation of them, yet I see no necessity of understanding the text merely of them, exclusive of what are commonly called our natural powers of thinking and acting, for it is strictly true of them as well as of those supernatural powers, that we have no sufficiency for them of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God. And as the Apostle expressly instances in our thinking, which is one, and that the first, of our natural powers, it seems highly reasonable to suppose, that he designs to lay it down as a maxim or general principle, that all our sufficiency is of God, even in the exertion of natural, as well as supernatural powers. And that we should understand him, as tho' he had intended to say to this effect. I am so far from glorying in myself, or ascribing the success of my ministry to my own ability or sufficiency, that I am deeply sensible that I have not only no sufficiency of myself for these miraculous and extraordinary operations which attend my ministry, or to think or devise of my own head the doctrines I teach, but in general, I have no sufficiency of myself to think any thing at all as of myself, but all my sufficiency is of God. I say it seems very fair and just from his manner of speaking thus to understand him. But whether it was his intention to be understood in this latitude, or not, it is certainly a sober truth, and of great importance to us to live under a deep and habitual sense of it, that we have no sufficiency of ourselves, for any thing, but do entirely depend upon God, both in our existence and in all our thoughts and actions, and this is what I propose to demonstrate and apply to practice in the following discourse.

In order to which it is necessary in the first place to reflect and consider a little particularly what we are and wherein our nature truly consists? And upon a little reflection it evidently appears that our nature properly consists in this, that we are perceptive or thinking and active creatures, or have a principle or power of

perceiving, thinking, understanding, and reasoning, and of exerting ourselves in an endless variety of actions of all which we are evidently conscious to ourselves, and in this consists our being and existence; for the moment we begun to perceive and act we begun to be, and if we should utterly cease to think and act we should cease to be and be no more. But whence is it that we think and act? Did we give ourselves these powers and faculties? No, by no means; for this would imply that we should act before we had a being, *i. e.*, that we should be and not be at the same time. Do we continue ourselves in being, or (which is the same thing) in the exercise of these powers? No, by no means. We find it is utterly out of our power to continue ourselves in being or health a moment or in the exercise of any of our faculties; this is evident from daily experience. So that we are wholly dependent beings, both for our existence and continuance, and all our sufficiency for either is entirely of God. The meaning of which must be this: that it was from the exertion of the Almighty will and power of God, that we at first came into being, and that it is from the continued exertion of the same Almighty will and power of God every moment that we continue to exist, to think and act. So that the moment God should cease to will our continuance in being, we should utterly cease and be no more; for as the Psalmist says, it is He that holdeth our soul in life, and perpetually replenisheth us with his loving kindness and tender mercy. Not but that the being he gave us and continueth to us is of such a kind that it is we ourselves that do truly think and act, and our thoughts and actions are properly our own exertions, and not the exertions of any other being. Of this we are intuitively certain, otherwise we could not blame ourselves if we think or act amiss. Nevertheless, that we do at all think and act depends entirely on the will and power of that Almighty Being, in and by whom alone it is that we do all of us, live and move and have our being. So that all our sufficiency is of him.

Furthermore let it be considered that besides these powers of thinking and acting which are the properties of our spiritual nature which is properly called ourselves, we have an animal and corporeal nature to which we are confined in this our present state, which also depends on the constant exertion of the will and power of Almighty God. The very law of union between our souls and bodies, as far as we can understand, is a mere arbitrary law or

establishment of the Divine Will, there being no other imaginable connection between natures so entirely different from each other. So that the moment he should let go his hold of us, or cease to will their union, they must immediately fall asunder. Nay the union and consistence of the parts of these bodies of ours, and indeed all other bodies depends upon a law of nature, which can be no other than an arbitrary constitution which God hath made according to which he perpetually wills and acts all in all, and without which we and everything about us should immediately dissolve into dust and atoms. Our health and ease as well as our existence in this present state, does in the nature of it depend on the good order not only of all the minute parts of our bodies, but also of all nature around us, with which, by the same arbitrary law of nature, they are connected; particularly with the air in which we breath, with the food we eat, and the water we drink; and who sees not that our supplies of food and drink depend on rain and fruitful seasons, and the universal good order of all nature. So that if God should suspend the laws of nature, or cease to exert his almighty power conformable to them we are immediately deprived of all the means of our subsistence. Upon this account also, it is evident that all our sufficiency is of God.

Moreover, as we thus depend upon God entirely for the being and continuance of our powers of perceiving and acting, and our subsistence in this present state; so we do no less depend on him for the objects on which these faculties of ours are constantly employed. Thus it is particularly in the first place as to our powers of perceiving and thinking. We have no sufficiency to think any thing, as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God. If we have ever so good eyes, to see with, yet if there were no objects to be seen, or light whereby we could behold them, or if we have ever so good ears, yet if there were no sound to be heard, our faculties of seeing and hearing could turn to no account. So if we are ever so well furnished with the powers of feeling, tasting, and smelling, we should be ne'er the better for them. Now it is God's all-sufficiency that constantly supplies us with all these objects of sense. We have no power of ourselves to furnish ourselves with any one of them, and are merely passive to every one of them, for they are all impressions made upon our senses or perceptions constantly produced in us by that Almighty Being who is the father of our spirits, who knows our

frame, and continually affects us with the perception of these endlessly various objects. And with respect to every one of them, all our sufficiency is of him.

He is the great light that perpetually shines in upon both our eyes and our minds, and continually furnishes them with all their objects. Particularly as to our sight. Be it so that we have from Him eyes and a power of seeing, yet none of the objects of sight depend on our power. This beautiful earth and sea, this endless variety of plants and animals, this splendid and glorious system of sun, moon and stars, are they our creatures? Did we make them, or do we preserve them? No, it is God that continually subsists and exhibits them to our view, and it is He that conveys to us through them, all the pleasure and advantage which we imagine they give us. They flow to us from his boundless all-sufficiency. But suppose them to exist, yet if there was no light wherewith to behold them, they would be to us as though they were not. We see every night how darkness draws a veil over all the objects of sight, and prints an universal blot upon the whole creation; now what is this light by which we see invisible objects? Is it our creature? No, we are merely passive to it, and find it is a constant impression on our eyes reflected to us from the various objects deriving from the sun whom we find to be the fountain of light. But is the sun the proper cause of it? No, from all we can learn or guess of him, he is only a vast senseless inert body of himself, and has no principle of thought or power in himself and is therefore only the tool or instrument that it pleases God to make use of in this affair, and that it is He, even the Almighty Father of Light, who is the true cause and author, the true original and fountain of all that light wherewith our minds are impressed, and by which we are enabled to behold all the objects of sight. So that all our sufficiency is still of Him.

And as you see the case is evidently thus with regard to sensible objects, and sensible light, so it is no less so with regard to intellectual objects and intellectual light, or the objects and light of our reason and understanding. The objects of our understandings, as distinguished from sense, are spiritual beings, such as our own souls, of whose existence and powers or faculties we are intuitively certain by our own consciousness and other intelligent creatures of whose existence we are sure by the exercise of our reason, and above all God, the father of spirits, of whose existence we are sure

both by intuition and demonstration, and all those necessary and eternal relations and connections of cause and effect, whole and parts, equality and inequality, likeness and unlikeness, proportions, agreements, and disagreements, etc., and all those necessary, eternal and unchangeable truths that result from them. All these objects we know are not the creatures of our minds. They depend not on our will and power, and especially these eternal truths. They were just the same before we had a being, and would invariably be the same they are if we were reduced to our original nothing, and all the power we have with regard to them is only to perceive and know them, which we could never do if they had not an existence. But how do we perceive them or think of them and know them? Is it any light of our own originally in ourselves? No, we have indeed a power of perceiving them given us of God, but we have no light of ourselves wherewith to behold them. It is He that perpetually irradiates our minds, and it is in his light that we see light, for it is his eternal word and wisdom that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, who is that glorious intellectual sun, the sun of righteousness, who enlighteneth all minds, as the sensible sun in the firmament enlighteneth all our eyes. How it is, as to the manner of it, we are not able to explain, as neither are we able to explain the manner of his enlightening us with sensible light, but we find we are alike passive to this as well as that, and must therefore conclude that it is by the perpetual action of the deity upon our minds that we are enlightened to behold those necessary and eternal truths which are originally in him, in his eternal mind, and are therefore indeed, one with him; without whose perpetual beaming upon us, or irradiating our minds, they would be all darkness or ignorance, just as we see the moon is a dark globe of itself, unless the sun shines upon it. So that as the moon has no light in herself but derives all her light from the sun, in like manner you see we have no sufficiency of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God. And so much more of the objects of faith and revelation.

I come now in the last place to consider how in our active powers we depend on God as well as in our powers of perceiving and thinking. And here we must observe that tho' we are intuitively certain from looking into ourselves, that our soul or spirit is indeed a principle of free activity or has a power given it of God of freely exert-

ing and determining itself, yet it depends upon him to assist it in all its exertions, and without his aid its strength is weakness.

I know it is a notion that very much obtains of late among unthinking or half-thinking people, who know little of themselves, and are willing to keep God as much out of sight as they can, to have a strong opinion of their own abilities, and their sufficiency to their own purposes, and consequently in the expressive language of the prophet, to sacrifice to their own net and burn incense to their own dreg. But for my part, the longer I live, the more abasing sense I have of my own weakness and insufficiency to my own happiness, and the more I must account it my greatest glory to depend on God and have recourse to him upon all occasions and in all respects. Nay, I must account it the greatest perfection and happiness of every intelligent creature to depend on a perpetual intercourse with the Deity for all his happiness and all his hopes. I know indeed that I have a self-exerting and self-determining principle otherwise I could not blame myself if I determine or act amiss. But after all when I find by sad experience how easily we are imposed on and how apt we are to be suddenly surprised and misled, and how weak we are of ourselves to bethink ourselves upon all occasions, to resist the force of appetites or withstand the force of a sudden temptation, and how many and frequent the instances are wherein we are surprised into wrong compliances, in a word, when I seriously consider myself as being what I really am, and think of God as being what He really is, I am apt to say with holy Job, nor can I think of a more proper reflection that a creature can make with regard to his almighty creator, in whose hands are his life and breath, and whose are all his ways: Lord, I have heard of Thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor my self and repent in dust and ashes. Nor can I have a greater satisfaction within myself under a sense of my own weakness and impotence than that my soul can make her boast in the Lord, and rejoice to find that all her springs are in Him.

I know it is a fashionable sort of philosophy (a science falsely so-called) to conceit that God governs the world only by a general providence according to certain fixed laws of nature which he hath established without ever interposing himself with regard to particular cases and persons. Doubtless it is right to be so persuaded of such a general providence, and consequently wrong to be always

looking out for particular remarkable interpositions upon every emergency. Notwithstanding which I must believe there is a particular providence that watches over us in all our ways, and that without any sensible varying from the general method of his proceeding in the government of the world, he may and does very often secretly and insensibly influence the minds of men, and lead them to such a determination of their thoughts and resolutions as they would not otherwise have gone into without his influence, and that it is very fit it should be so, as it is of the nature of a creature to be a depending being, and that such a belief is of very great use to us, as it naturally leads us to have recourse to God upon all occasions as our only refuge and chief good, and makes the practice of devotion a rational, as it is in its own nature a most useful exercise for the improving and perfecting our reasonable and immortal nature in every virtue wherein its true perfection and happiness consists. And however some may have stupified themselves by the contrary notions into a neglect of God and all religion, yet generally speaking the soul of man seems to have such a natural sense of its imbecility and dependence and of its insufficiency for its own guidance and conduct, as to be apt to have recourse to the great parent of immortal spirits, especially in circumstances of necessity and distress; which has often been observed to be the case even of those who at other times have either disputed or laughed themselves out of a serious regard to God and religion; their vain philosophy has failed them in time of trial and distress, and they have been glad to have recourse to the juster notions of God and themselves which Christianity agreeable to the only genuine and true philosophy, teaches and inculcates upon us, *viz.*, that the very hairs of our head are numbered, and not one of them falls to the ground without our Heavenly Father.

This at least is certain from the experience of all good men; even of the greatest and best of men in all ages, that this belief with a practice correspondent to it, has ever given them the truest and most genuine peace and tranquillity of mind, and the most comfortable acquiescence and joy; a peace of God which passeth all understanding, and nothing more speaks the excellency and vast advantage of Christianity than this, that it not only leads us to this sense of our dependence on God, and to place all our sufficiency in him, who is the Rock of Ages, and constantly to apply ourselves to him upon all occasions for guidance and assistance under all our

darkness and weakness, but does moreover assure us through the mediation of Christ that our dependence upon him and application to him shall not be in vain, but that as sure as we watch and pray and strive on our parts, so sure he will give us the conduct and assistance of his Holy Spirit, and our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. How then doth it become us poor ignorant frail creatures, since we have no sufficiency of ourselves to our own true happiness, and all our sufficiency is of God, to be thankful and rejoice in the great and precious promises of the Gospel, and the blessed aids and comforts of Christianity, and to make the wisest and best use of it we possibly can, and not to suffer any temptation whatsoever to prevail upon us ever to think meanly of, much less to depart from this holy commandment delivered to us.

Thus you have seen, my brethren, the full force and extent of this great principle of all religion in my text. You have seen it demonstrated upon the foot of just reasoning from the nature of things, and corroborated from other texts of holy Scripture, that it is literally true that we have no sufficiency of ourselves, to think or do any thing as of our selves, but that our sufficiency is of God. You have seen likewise the excellent tendency of this principle to promote in us the exercise of true devotion, and to make us deeply sensible of God and of the true worth and excellency of Christianity. To this let me add the great use of it to promote in us true humility which is the foundation of every other virtue. How should it beget in us the deepest and most abasing sense of our own impotence and nothingness, that God may be all in all? How extremely diffident ought we to be of ourselves, and how careful that we do not lean too much to our own understanding? How ought we to prostrate our souls, and be nothing in our own eyes before that glorious all-sufficient God on whom we do so entirely depend, and be glad to be beholden to Him for all our happiness and all our hopes, and laying aside all guile and all pride and self-sufficiency, like newborn babes earnestly desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby, being of that meek, quiet, and teachable spirit, which in the sight of God, is of great price?

And lastly to conclude, since we have all our powers and faculties from God and all our sufficiency is of Him in the exercise of them, that as the wise king teaches, it is not in man that walketh to direct his goings; let us therefore take the most wise and good advice he gives us, In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall

direct thy steps. And let us seriously consider how base, how ungrateful and perverse we shall be if we fly in his face and use them to no other purposes than in rebellion against him, and as it were, doing despite to the spirit of his grace. On the other hand, since all our springs are in him, and our whole dependence is on him for every moment we live and every breath we breathe, and in every thought we think, and in every action we do, what manner of persons ought we to be in all our conversation before him, how careful not to offend him, and how solicitous to please him in all our behavior? How much concerned to use all the powers and faculties He hath given and continueth to us, to his honor and in such a manner as may best answer the end of our being, always committing the keeping of our souls to him in well doing, as into the hands of a faithful creator, that we may be always safe under the protection of his good providence and the conduct of the Holy Spirit, here and everlastingly happy in his all-sufficiency hereafter, which God of his infinite mercy grant through Jesus Christ.

St. Aug. 20, 1749. Rip. A. 27, '49. At Cohabit, East Guilf. and W. Haven, Oct., 1749. Pembrok, July 25, 1750.

A SERMON / On The / FAST / To Implore God's Blessing on / The Expedition Against Niagara / and Crown Point. May 21, 1756. / At both Trinity Church and Chapel.

Of the Duty of Trusting in God in Time of War

Psalm XX. 7. Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

The generality of mankind are so stupid, so immersed in sensual pleasures and so attached to this present world, and multitudes are so alienated from God and enslaved to their lusts and under the dominion and guilt of sin, that it seems indispensably necessary that God the great and good governor of the world should now and then interpose in the course of his providence in some remarkable and distressing manner to awaken them and rouse them up, and make them seriously and in earnest to bethink themselves, to repent, reform and return to their duty. And indeed if he did not do so, they would in a little time grow so bad that they could hardly subsist tolerably together in society, by reason of the fatal and pernicious effects of the prevalence of vice and wickedness. Now these interpositions in the course of providence are, in the expressive language of the Holy Scriptures, called God's judgments; implying as tho' He, as the great judge of the world, had passed a sentence upon them, that it is high time they should be severely punished for this wickedness, when of the God that begat them they are grown unmindful and have ungratefully forsaken the Rock that formed them. When therefore God's judgments are thus abroad in the earth, the gracious design and intent of them is, that the inhabitants of the earth may learn righteousness, may learn to fear God and keep his commandments.

In this light it is, that we ought to consider the uncommon and remarkable dispensations of divine providence, both in the past and present year. And for this pious purpose it is, that our excellent Governor hath no less wisely than religiously appointed and

set apart this day that we might seriously bethink ourselves of our entire dependence upon God, that we might in earnest make it our business to search and try our ways, and return to him with all our hearts, and be concerned above all things to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, that our iniquities may not prove our ruin.

This age is perhaps one of the most wicked of any age hitherto! Such a neglect and contempt of religion, in some shape or other; such impiety and profaneness by horrid oaths and imprecation: such luxury and sensuality; such devotedness to this present world, without scarce turning a thought towards the world to come; with such a deluge of vice in every shape perhaps scarce ever obtained! And particularly such a growth of infidelity and contempt of the Gospel, which beyond all controversy as hath been a 1000 times demonstrated to come from God and to be infinitely the best religion that ever obtained in the world: (yet I say such a neglect and contempt of it hath obtained in this abandoned age,) that, whereas heretofore whatever men thought, they were ashamed not to be reputed believers of Christianity; now things are come to that sad pass, that many who would be thought the most polite people seem ashamed to have it thought they should be guilty of so great a weakness as to believe a syllable of it, or trouble their heads about it. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation; such an age as this? What could be expected but that he would by some remarkable interposition of his providence chastise and awaken this stupid age to bethink themselves whence they are fallen and what a horrid crime they are guilty of in despising the Gospel of his Son; that inestimable talent, that great, that last message mankind are ever to expect from him?

Accordingly as this age hath made itself so remarkably stupid, unbelieving and vicious, God hath in the close of it made the last year one of the most remarkable of any year in any age from the beginning of the world to this day! When hath the like been ever known, that more than one quarter of this globe both by sea and land, hath been made to tremble and rock the nations in such an astonishing manner? Have not we in this continent through a vast tract of it been surprised with such a tremendous shock as seemed to threaten us in a moment to be swallowed up alive or buried in our own ruins, which has in fact been the case of many, many thousands of poor souls in other parts, who were at once sent into

eternity, and multitudes that survived stripped of all they had in the world? When after all, such hath been the distinguishing mercy of God that we are safe! Was ever the whole Atlantic Ocean affected in its waters in such a surprising manner? And when was so vast a part of Europe and Africa both, *i. e.*, so large a part of the globe from the utmost bounds of the known north to the very equinoctial south made at once to shudder and tremble, and so many and great cities within a few moments to be shook to pieces and overwhelm their inhabitants in their ruins? Surely some great, some important design of Providence must have been intended to be accomplished by such a shocking event, so far and wide extended. And what else could it be, but to awake the nations and rouse them up from their stupid lethargy. And to make them seriously bethink themselves and remember the name of the Lord their God? That glorious and fearful name The Lord their God!

The time is not yet come, as far as we can understand by the prophesies, of which it is said, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon earth? However, when we hear of such terrible earthquakes in divers places, we ought certainly to consider them as preludes leading on towards it, and be awakened to repent and do our first works. For to us it matters little whether Christ's coming, in the sense of the prophesy, be nearer or further off, since it is certain that the time of every man's death is, to him, the time of Christ's coming; for after death comes the judgment. And surely when we have felt such a violent shock as is a specimen and part of those terrible shocks by which many thousands and ten-thousands have in a moment been dest: yed and sent before the dread tribunal of Christ, it is certainly high time to look about us and in earnest consider what ground we stand on, and whether we are in a tolerable condition for such a summons, and if our case at best is very dark and dubious which I doubt is the case of most of us, and desperate of many, how ought we to be engaged immediately to go into such a course of unfeigned repentance as shall issue in a thorough reformation? How ought we to be concerned so to conduct for the future in the diligent use of the public worship and the means of grace, and a universal course of good behavior, as may fit us to be always ready to meet our God and our Judge, and give so good an account of ourselves to him as may qualify us for a gracious acceptance with him thro' his free grace and the all-sufficient merits and mediation of the blessed Jesus!

In a word, what manner of persons ought we to be in all godly and holy conversation? I hope at least mankind may so far be awakened and reformed that the patience and forbearance of God may be a little further lengthened out, till the time of the grand appearance of our Lord be fulfilled, when he must be expected, which at furthest cannot be far off.

Let this then be the use that we of this nation and land make of these tremendous visitations, as it is the declared intention and exhortation of our pious rulers we should do. Especially since we are so loudly called upon by another of those awful preludes which the prophesy mentions as leading on to that grand catastrophe; wars and rumors of war. We are, my brethren, surrounded by a perfidious nation, who have been long most injuriously encroaching upon us, and who in conjunction with many barbarous and savage enemies, are daily laying waste our borders with fire and sword, and making nearer and nearer approaches towards us, and have several strong fortresses raised against us, upon our own ground. Our most gracious sovereign is engaged himself, and doing all he can to engage and encourage us, to defend ourselves, and drive them off from their encroachments. Now therefore, do we seriously consider whether we go forth in our own strength, or in the strength of the Lord and in the power of his might? and whether we do religiously remember the name of the Lord our God, or do not rather too must confide in an arm of flesh, our sword and our bow, are chariots and our horses. Lastly whether we are in earnest concerned by true repentance and reformation to qualify ourselves for God's protection, assistance and conduct.

War is indeed a terrible judgment, and a prodigious scourge to a sinful nation: and no less than earthquakes, calls aloud upon us to search and try our ways, and turn to God with all our hearts, and seriously remember the name of the Lord our God: that God, who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, in whose hands are the hearts of princes, and who turneth them as the rivers of water are turned. War is the reproach of mankind, and the disgrace of human nature! that man to man should be a wolf, or like a beast of prey, and embrue themselves in each other's blood! What a horrid shame and scandal is it? That for gratifying the pride and ambition and lust of dominion, tyranny and lawless rule in a few of the upper part of the human race, many thousands of their brethren of the same flesh and blood should go together into

the field of battle with a professed design to cut each other's throats and wallow in each other's blood, scattering firebrands, arrows and death, regardless of the cries and shrieks of poor distressed mortals! What a horrid, what a hideous thing is this? War is therefore a terrible, a tremendous evil, and as I said a most wretched scandal to human kind! It is however in many cases, a very necessary evil, as bad as it is. It is one of the first laws or dictates of nature to assert our own rights and defend ourselves when we are injuriously attacked and assaulted. In this case there is no other way to save ourselves from ruin. And when our country lies bleeding by the ravages of encroaching and merciless enemies, and our lives and liberties, our families and estates, and above all our holy religion lies at stake, it must be an indispensable duty to arm in their defense and glorious to die in so good a cause.

But when things come to such a fatal necessity, what must we do? What says my text? We must remember the name of the Lord our God. We must indeed arm ourselves with all sorts of armor and make use of all manner of instruments of war; we must apply ourselves with the utmost wisdom, care and diligence, that nothing be wanting to the success of our enterprise, and in the day of battle we must be intrepid, courageous and valiant, and quit ourselves like men and be strong, and fight with the utmost vigor and resolution for the cities of our God. In short we must do every thing we can, and exert ourselves to the utmost of our power as tho' the success of all depended on ourselves; and at the same time we must have all our hopes and dependence on God. We must exert the utmost of our skill and strength, but then we must be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. We must remember that our strength is but weakness, and that we are but frail depending creatures; that a horse is but a vain thing to save a man, and that no man is delivered by much strength; that we must not trust in our own sword, nor is it our own bow that can save us, without the help of that almighty being on whom we depend, who teacheth our hands to war and our fingers to fight, and who alone can inspire us with courage and activity in the day of battle, and enable us to tread down our enemies.

How often have the wisest and best laid schemes been defeated by some little unforeseen accident? And how often the counsels of the craftiest Achitophels been turned into foolishness? How often

have the most intrepid soldiers been struck with sudden and unaccountable panics by the merest trifle of an accident, and the most valiant and inexperienced generals unable to command their troops, or diverted from pursuing their enterprise, or their advantages, by some sudden thought, or unexpected event, and many things occur which can no otherwise be accounted for, but from some secret interposition of the all-governing providence of almighty God, which has at once blasted all their hopes and views, and such we may justly expect will be our case if we trust only in our own sufficiency, our chariots and our horsemen, our own sword and bow, or in any of our military preparations or any policy or strength of our own; and are so alienated from God, and so lost to all sense of our dependence upon him, that we will not remember the name of the Lord our God. I say, in this case, what else can we expect but that the God that made us will be unmindful of us, and that the rock that formed us will show us no favor. He hath indeed of his infinite goodness assured us, that if we seek him with all our hearts, he will be found of us, but he hath no less positively threatened us, and verified it in multitudes of instances in holy scripture, that if we forsake him he will cast us off forever; and what can we expect else, but that this will be our sorrowful fate? Let us therefore, my dear brethren, in order to prevent so sad a fate resolve this day and henceforward that we will religiously and devoutly remember the name of the Lord our God. And it shall be the business of the remaining part of my discourse to explain to you briefly what is implied in this duty.

And first it does not mean merely that we should recollect ourselves in a speculative manner concerning God; but it must be always considered that such expressions as knowing, remembering and believing God, in the language of Holy Scripture ever imply all those devout affections and that obedient and dutiful behavior towards him, which a deep sense of him naturally tends to inspire us with. Thus to know the God of our Fathers, in David's language, is, to love and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind; so to remember our Creator Solomon explains by fearing God and keeping his commandments. Would we then rightly remember the name of the Lord our God let us remember that it implies, that we must live under a deep and habitual sense of our entire dependence upon him for our life and breath and being every moment, and

for all our enjoyments and accommodations, and all our hopes in time and to all eternity; that it is therefore our indispensable duty to look up to him upon all occasions, and confide entirely in his good providence, for success in all our enterprises, and in all our ways to acknowledge him, and depend upon him to direct our steps; for we have no sufficiency of ourselves, to think or do anything as of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God. It implies moreover that we live under a deep and grateful sense of the innumerable obligations that we are daily and hourly under to his infinite goodness, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, even all things that pertain both to life and godliness; both to our well-being in this life, and our everlasting happiness in the life to come. The consequence of which is, that remembering God must imply that we love him with all our hearts and minds and might, and be concerned above all things so to conduct ourselves in all our behavior towards one another, as well as towards him, in such a manner as to please him and gain his acceptance, and avoid every thing that may displease the pure eyes of his glory. And in consequence of this it must also imply that we do daily and weekly worship and adore him; that we do most gratefully give him the praise and glory of every thing we enjoy, and pray to him continually every day for whatsoever we stand in need of. And those that live in neglect of these duties are said in holy scripture to be such as know not God, and forget God; such as have not the fear of God before their eyes, and God is not in all their thoughts. And such are justly liable to that tremendous threatening that he will pour out his indignation upon those that know not God, and upon the families that call not upon his name.

Would we then succeed in our armaments and prosper in our warlike enterprises, you plainly see the method we must take, we must thus devoutly and practically remember the name of the Lord our God, and place our whole trust in him to give us victory and success. We must moreover in the next place, have a just zeal for God's true religion, for this is also implied in this expression, that true religion which Christ came down from Heaven to publish to mankind in the name of God, who himself is therefore some times called the name Jehovah, which is used as a personal character, importing that glorious person concerning whom God declared with a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well

pleased, and hath commanded us all to hear him. And he hath assured us that if we are ashamed of him and his words in this generation, he will be ashamed of us before his father and the holy angels. Let us then remember him who is called the Lord of Hosts and the God of armies and the Captain of our salvation. He is so in a spiritual sense, and he is no less so in a temporal sense, for he it is who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords; who hath all power both in heaven and earth, and ruleth in the armies of heaven and doth his will among the inhabitants of the earth, and none may stay his hand or say unto him what dost thou! Let us then confide in him to overrule all the dark events and gloomy appearances of providence in such a manner as to bring good out of evil and make the worst of evils that can occur be subservient to the greatest and best good in the whole and result of things. It is certain we have been very wicked and need to be severely chastised, and this is what gives us the greatest reason to fear what the events may be of our present enterprises, and this leads me to observe,

Lastly, that to remember the name of the Lord our God, must imply, that we humble ourselves before him with true repentance, and contrition of heart, as the only course we can take to avert his judgments and qualify ourselves for his mercies, and secure his protection and blessing on our present undertakings. In vain do we hope and trust in God, nay it is the greatest presumption so to do, if we will persist in our rebellion; in our unbelief and disobedience. In vain do we look for his favor and blessing, if we will still go on in our wicked courses, to neglect our duty to him, and add drunkenness to thirst, and return with the dog to his vomit, etc. Let us then search and try our ways and turn unto the Lord our God with all our hearts. Let us make it the great business of this day to search out every root of bitterness that may be springing up among us or in us, and apply ourselves in earnest to mortify and subdue it, and know every man the plague of his own heart, and confess and bewail his sins before God with a perfect hatred of them and a full purpose of amendment and reformation. But let us not think that this is merely the work of a day! No, let us not deceive ourselves; our repentance is of no avail before God, if it does not alter the whole habit of our lives, and exert and display itself in a universal good behavior both towards God and man, in all sobriety, godliness, and righteousness. If this be the happy

effect of it we may then humbly hope that God will return in mercy to us, and build us up, and not pluck us down, and that He will create a defense upon all our glory, and grant us victory and success against all our enemies, as well as peace in our borders and health in our habitations; that he will crown the year with his goodness, and cause his paths to drop fatness to us, and give us to sit every man under his vine and under his figtree and have nothing to make us afraid. In a word if we will steadfastly persist in all the ways of well-doing we may undoubtedly look to him both for his blessing here and life forevermore.

A / DEMONSTRATION / of the / REASONABLENESS, USEFULNESS, / And / GREAT DUTY / Of / PRAYER. /

In Pride, in reasoning Pride their Error lies,
Who quit their Sphere and rush into the Skies. —Pope.

Pietate adversus Deos sublata, Fides etiam, & Societas Humani Generis, & excellentissima Vertus Justitia tollitur.— *Tull.*

Credendum est neminem virorum bonorum talem fuisse, nice adjuvante Deo. —*Idem.*

Deum roga bonam mentem, bonam valetudinem Animi, deinde Corporis. —Seneca.

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom. — Sol.

Thou castest off Fear, and restrainest Prayer before God. —*Job*

Watch and pray that ye enter not into Temptation. — Mat. 26.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, D.D. / President of King's College, and Lecturer of Trinity Church, in / NEW YORK. / NEW-YORK: / Printed by W. Weyman, in Broad-street, not far from the Exchange. / 1760.

Advertisement

The following discourse was written some time past, at the earnest request of a person of note, who put into my hands a manuscript, wherein it was undertaken to prove by reason, that prayer, as it implies a petition to God, to supply any wants of ours, is in effect, an utterly impertinent and insignificant thing, and but a mere "useless ceremony." Who the author of that paper was, I know not, nor do I desire to know. But as the doctrine contained in it is of most fatal tendency, I was willing to do my utmost to confute it. And as I have too much reason now, to fear there may be some others among us, that may have unhappily imbibed the like unaccountable way of reasoning (if it may be called reasoning) when I had taken the trouble of writing it, I was willing, upon the advice of friends, to make it more extensively useful, by committing it to the press, and I pray God it may be attended with his blessing.

To His Excellency Jeffery Amherst, Esq., Major General, and Commander in Chief, of All His Majesty's Forces in North America

May it please your Excellency,

As your Excellency's conduct with regard to religion, as well as in all other respects has been truly exemplary; I humbly beg leave to inscribe the following Discourse, in the cause of religion, to Your Excellency's name, and wish it was more worthy of your acceptance.

Permit me, Sir, on this occasion, to join with the whole Nation, and especially, all the English America, in congratulating Your Excellency, most affectionately, on the glorious success of His Majesty's Arms, under your conduct, in the reduction of all Canada, which is an event of immortal renown, and a signal reward of your piety and virtue; and I beg leave to subscribe myself, with great esteem,

May it please Your Excellency,
Your Excellency's
Most humble and
Most obedient servant,
Samuel Johnson.

King's College, New-York,
October 8, 1760.

A Demonstration of the Great Duty and Usefulness of Prayer

What is here attempted, is a demonstration of the reasonableness, usefulness, and great duty of prayer, as including, not only a most grateful acknowledgement of all the instances of God's goodness towards us, but also a humble and resigned address to him for the supply of our wants, under a deep sense of our entire dependence upon him.

In both these senses I maintain, that prayer is an indispensable duty, founded in the reason and nature of things; in the nature of God and of man, and the relation, in which, by the necessity of our nature, we stand in to him. In order to be convinced of this, we need only consider fully, what we mean by the word duty; what God is; and what we are; and the nature of that relation we stand in to Him. These I must therefore define; and

1. By the word duty, I mean that obligation we are immediately under from the inward sense of our own reason and consciences, to consider and treat, or conduct, towards every being, person and thing, as being what in truth it is, in order to our true happiness. But that which gives it the full force of obligation, and so constitutes the complete notion of duty, is, the consideration of it, not only as being a dictate of our own reason and consciences, arising from our conception of the truth and nature of things; but moreover, and chiefly, as being the will of God, our great creator and moral governor, concerning us, relating to what he requireth us to do or forbear, in order to our true happiness. Now,

2. By *God*, I mean, that great and glorious being who is infinitely intelligent and active, infinitely wise and powerful, holy, just, and good, from whom we and all things derive, and on whom we do entirely depend for every moment we live, and every breath we breathe, and all we enjoy and hope for, both in time and to all eternity; to whom we are accountable for all that we think, speak, and do; and from whose goodness and justice, we have all reason to expect we shall be rewarded, or punished, according as our behavior is good or bad, virtuous or vicious. Whether every one that pretends to think in earnest, hath this notion of God, I know not; but to me it evidently appears, from the consideration of nature and providence, that this is the notion we ought to have of him. And I would wish any one that hesitates, exactly to read and consider Dr. Clark's *Demonstration of the Existence and Attributes of God*; and Mr. Wollaston's *Religion of Nature*; not to mention the Archbishop of Cambray, and many others. And,

3. By *man*, I mean, what every one that duly considers, and truly knows himself, must be intuitively sensible he really is; a mere dependent being, that came into being, and subsists by the mere will and power of God, having no sufficiency in himself to continue himself in being, life, or health, so much as one moment, nor so much as to think any thing of himself, but all his sufficiency is of God, both with regard to his being, and well-being. He is indeed furnished with intelligent and free, active, self-exerting powers; but at the same time (as he is in fact now) he is a very frail and sickly, a very weak and mortal creature, and which is worse, he is a very sinful and untoward creature, and is daily violating the inward sense of his own reason and conscience, and acting con-

trary to the moral perfections, and consequently the will of his maker, preserver, and governor. And yet, from the divine attributes, compared with his present state, and the powers and faculties he is endowed with, from whence the true end of his being must be judged of, there seems all imaginable reason to conclude, that this life is not his all, but that he is now only in a state of probation for another state after this life; that, as to his better part, he is really an immortal being, and accountable for his behavior here. Now therefore,

4thly. The relation we stand in to God, is evidently that of creatures to their creator; that of mere dependents to their benefactor; that of subjects to their king and governor; and moreover, that of sinners and criminals with regard to their judge; and unable, without his instruction and assistance, to qualify themselves for, or to regain, his favor. If then it be our duty, considering ourselves as being what we are, to conduct ourselves towards God as being what he is, it demonstratively follows,

5thly. That it must be our duty, not only as creatures, children, dependents, and subjects, to give all possible expression and proof of our love, gratitude, and obedience to God, as our creator and father, and our great benefactor and supreme king and governor; but moreover, as we are frail creatures, and liable to innumerable casualties and calamities, and depend on him every moment for our preservation and well-being, it must be evidently fit, right, and our bounden duty, every day to implore his protection and blessing, and humbly address ourselves to him for the supply of our wants.

And lastly, as we are sinners, and have in fact, in innumerable instances, violated our duty to him as our king and judge, to whom we are accountable for our behavior; and at the same time, if we do at all know ourselves, we must be conscious, not only of our guilt, but also of our great weakness, and of the little command we have of our appetites and passions, especially (as the case generally is) if we have contracted any vicious habits, which are extremely difficult to conquer; I say, the fact being thus, it must be no less evidently fit, right, and our bounden duty, most humbly to confess and bewail our sins, and beg God's pardon for whatsoever we have done amiss, and to implore his help and assistance to enable us to conduct better for the future, and to bear with patience whatsoever he calls us to suffer in the course of his providence, and to do with

cheerfulness and fidelity what he requires of us, in order to answer the end of our being, which is our true perfection and happiness.

Thus it appears to me, that this duty of prayer, is demonstratively established from the reason and nature of things; and this reasoning is confirmed to be right from fact and experience correspondent to it, it being always found, that, by such a constant course of prayer, joined with vigilance, and a due care of their conduct, good men have been enabled to gain and maintain a good mastery of their vicious tempers and habits, and to make proficiency in every virtue, agreeable to an ancient maxim or observation, "That as persisting in a course of sinning will make a man leave praying, so a steadfast perseverence in a course of prayer, will eventually make a man leave sinning, and return to his duty."

Now against all this, it hath been objected by some, who I doubt do not rightly know God, or themselves, "That it reflects hard on the wisdom, benevolence and justice of God, to suppose, that he hath not given mankind sufficient capacities to distinguish right from wrong, virtue from vice, etc., and sufficient abilities to answer the end of their being. And if he hath done this, prayer must be a useless ceremony." This is illustrated, by comparing man to a machine, which if it is not so made as to answer its end without a continual interposition, it must give but a poor notion of the wisdom or power of its author, etc.

To this I answer: if man were indeed but a machine, this reasoning would be right enough, even him supposing a conscious machine. But it can be nothing to the purpose if he be, as in fact he is, not only an intelligent, but also a free, active, self-exerting creature, and therefore of a nature to be led to answer the end of his being, not by mechanism, but in the way of moral government, being designed to be influenced by considerations and motives suggested to his understanding, under the sense of which he is freely to exert his own activity, in order to answer the end of his being.

In this case, he may be (as in fact, I allow he is) endowed with sufficient powers, faculties, and means to answer the end of his being, so that it shall be his own fault if he does not; and yet, as he is a free agent, it must be in his power to abuse his liberty, and other faculties, so as to fall short of it, without the divine interposition. But this, from the nature of moral government, he may always be secure of, if he will in earnest apply himself to God by

prayer, and diligently make use of the means which he hath put within his power, and pointed out to him.

But for the full clearing up of this objection, and the further demonstration of the duty of prayer, I will next proceed, and go upon the principle the objector allows, *viz.*, "That the duty of any creature must be determined (or judged of) by the end from which it was created." Let us consider, what must be supposed to be the end for which man was created? And as to this, no doubt but it must be allowed, that the end for which it must be supposed an infinitely wise and good God brought man into being, was, that he might do honor to his Maker, and enjoy himself, and be, in some good degree, happy in the participation and enjoyment of his goodness. And he that willed this end, must have willed the means necessary to it. Consequently it is allowed, that man is furnished with sufficient powers, abilities, and means for his true happiness. He is an intelligent creature, and consequently capable of knowing wherein his true happiness consists, and the means of attaining it. And he is a free, active, self-exerting creature, and therefore is capable of an active application of himself to the pursuit of his happiness, in the use of the means conducive to it. But then, he is of himself an ignorant creature, and therefore needs to be instructed both in the end and the means; and he is a weak dependent being, and therefore needs to be assisted, as well as instructed; for both which he must necessarily depend upon God.

And indeed I am apt to think, that if the nature of a creature, as such, be duly considered, it will be found that no creature is, or ever was, or can be made self-sufficient to his own happiness; nor is it fit it should, if it were possible. On the contrary, as every creature is in itself, a mere dependent being, it is most fit that every conscious, intelligent creature, should habitually live under a deep sense of its dependence, as a necessary means to its true happiness, and account it its greatest glory, its true perfection, and highest satisfaction, to hold a perpetual intercourse with the great parent mind, the eternal Father of Spirits, in and by whom it lives and moves, and hath its being; and in doing this, to make it its own intelligent free act and deed to exert and express its sense of its dependence, and its earnest aspirations after, and struggles towards an entire free active union of its will with the will of its great and almighty parent, in conformity to the moral perfections

of his nature, wherein its highest perfection and happiness consists. And this, in effect, is all that is implied in prayer, which therefore must in the nature of the thing, be a necessary means towards answering the end of our being. Now therefore let us lay these propositions together.

1. The end of our being is our true and endless happiness. I say *endless*, because it is plain we cannot be truly happy, without having a prospect of being endlessly so; and it is no less plain that we cannot attain to the entire end of our being, so as to be truly happy, in this very mixed imperfect state; our existence therefore must reach forward and extend to an endless state of further proficiency after this life.

2. It is impossible we should be happy; nay impossible in the nature of the thing, but that we must be miserable under the power and guilt of sin, or in a course of deviation from moral rectitude, both from the mischievous nature of sin in itself, and from the inward reproaches of our own reason and consciences, as well as the displeasure of our maker. On the contrary,

3. Our true happiness, as free, intelligent and active beings, or moral agents, must consist in the vast satisfaction arising from the consciousness of our sincere and faithful practice of, and proficiency in, all moral virtues, and a sense of the divine favor and approbation, which will not fail to attend it.

4. Our practice and proficiency in all moral virtues, implies our conformity to the moral perfections of God, the Author of our being, and on whom we depend; at least, our constant care and endeavor, as far as we are able, to be holy as He is holy, pure as He is pure, righteous as He is righteous, true and faithful, kind and merciful, as He is: all which are, in the nature of them, conducive and necessary to our happiness, and therefore must be his will and law concerning us, because he would have us happy. Now,

5thly, and lastly. The natural and necessary means, in the nature of things, towards these attainments, is to have recourse to God, and converse frequently with that great pattern of all moral perfections; lamenting our many and great deficiencies, in falling short of these things, and our great untowardness in acting so much the reverse of them, so contrary to his blessed will; imploring his pardon and mercy for our past miscarriages, and expressing our earnest aspirations after amendment, and better proficiency

for the future; and finally, from a due sense of the great weakness of our reason and resolution, and the strength of our appetites and passions, and ill habits, and the many temptations that surround us, earnestly soliciting the secret influences and assistances of that great Parent Spirit on whom we depend, to enable us to gain and maintain the mastery of our selves, and to make all possible proficiency in all those virtues and moral attainments, wherein our true perfection and happiness consists.

Now all these are the proper exercises of prayer! And sure I am, he cannot see either deep or far into the present condition of human nature, who is not fully sensible that such a practice is evidently, in the nature of things, conducive and necessary to all moral proficiency; and consequently, that it is so far from being "a useless ceremony," that it is of the greatest use, and therefore an indispensable duty, as being a necessary means towards answering the end of our being.

If, indeed, our objector is fully sure and conscious to himself, that he never has, nor ever does, in the least vary, in thought, word, or deed, from the great rules of virtue, and moral rectitude, it will be allowed that he has no occasion to ask God's pardon; and if he perfectly knows that he has always in himself that strength and presence of mind, as to have and maintain an entire mastery of his lusts and passions, and that he can steadily withstand all temptations, and that by dint of his own strength, he always actually does his whole duty, all that is right and good, both towards God and man, I own he has no occasion to ask God's help, but has infinite reason to be thankful, and this is all he has to do. But I very much question, whether he can or will venture to say all this. Nay, I question, whether this last was ever the case of any creature, no not even of the highest angel in heaven, without a divine influence, much less of such a frail creature as man evidently is.

For my own part, I must be free to confess, that it is far from being the case with me, and I believe there are very few considerate persons but such as will readily join with me. I am conscious that I am so untoward and deficient, and so weak and infirm, that I need to ask God's pardon and mercy, and his help and assistance every day that I live; and this I find to be the only course I can take, in conjunction with due care and vigilance, to get the better of my infirmities, and to make any tolerable proficiency in virtue. And it is to me the greatest satisfaction in the

world, to hold such a frequent intercourse with the great Father of my spirit, and thereby to impress my mind with a due sense of his perpetual presence with me, and inspection over me, and in view thereof, to commit myself to his protection, guidance and blessing in all my ways.

This sense of God's universal presence and all-seeing eye, which is vastly improved and cultivated by the daily exercise of prayer, is of the utmost importance to make us watchful and circumspect in all our behavior before him, nay, in the tempers of our hearts, as well as the conduct of our lives; and the more so, as it hath moreover the greatest tendency to make and keep us humble, for, humility is the basis of all other virtues, as on the other hand, pride, self-conceit, and self-sufficiency, are tempers extremely misbecoming a mere dependent, weak, and sinful being, and utter enemies to all proficiency in knowledge, or virtue. It is therefore very fit that our creator should keep us in a perpetual state of dependence, and that we should, by the frequent practice of prayer, keep up and cultivate in our minds, a most humble sense of our weakness, dependence and untowardness, as a necessary means in order to our amendment and proficiency in virtue and happiness.

Since, therefore, it is thus manifest, that prayer is in the nature of the thing, such an effectual means to promote our proficiency in all moral virtue, in order to our true happiness, which is the end of our being, it is evident, that inasmuch as God wills this end, he must most certainly also will this means, and consequently, that it must be his will and law concerning us, that we should live in the daily performance of this duty. It must therefore be a direct rebellion against him, and the constitution which he hath made, to live in the neglect of it.

And since we are placed in society, and have common sins to confess and reform, and common wants, both temporal and spiritual, that we must depend upon God, the common Father and Lord of all, for the supply of, and inasmuch as everything that concerns our common weal, is best promoted by social combinations, it is evident that a common social and public worship, in prayer as well as praise, must be our indispensable duty, as well as personal: especially, if we moreover consider, that such a common social worship in jointly paying our common duty, to our common heavenly Father, Lord, and Governor, is most amiable in itself, and hath, in the nature of the thing, a direct tendency to promote

universal benevolence, brotherly love, the love of public weal, and all social virtues towards one another, as well as piety towards God. So that, in order to any one's being a true patriot or friend to the public weal of mankind, and his country, it is indispensably necessary that he should set a good example of a frequent and religious attendance on the public worship: nay he must be an enemy to mankind if he does not. And it is a thing of most melancholy consideration in this degenerate age, that since prayer, both personal and social, hath been so much decried and despised, and the public worship, as well as private, so much neglected, and especially by many great examples in our nation, there hath been a vast increase of all sorts of immoralities, and such a deluge of vice prevailing, as threatens the utter ruin both of our nation and its colonies.

But to proceed. It is further objected against this great duty of prayer, that, in the nature of the thing, prayer can attain no end, and therefore must be impertinent, because there is a certain established course of providence, which cannot be altered without a miracle, which we have no right to expect or desire. To this I answer,

1. A miracle implies a very sensible and manifest variation from the known established laws of nature, whereas, he that hath studied nature, can easily conceive of a thousand cases wherein God may secretly interpose to prevent, or bring about various events in the course of providence, without any sensible variation from the general known established laws of nature; as, in varying the course of winds and weather, preventing or healing sicknesses, and the like. Nor can it reasonably be denied, or doubted, but God can secretly influence the thoughts, purposes and resolutions of men, in a manner (in the time of it) insensible to themselves, and without at all interrupting their freedom, which may be attended with events, either on the one hand very fatal,* or greatly benefical to them on the other, that would not otherwise have occurred, and which in many cases, may have great and lasting influence, even on the public affairs of mankind, as well as those of particular persons.* And I believe there are not many that have duly observed the state of their own minds, and the course of providence in the various events that have occurred to them, but who (without the least

* *Quos Jupiter vult perdere prius dementat. Dict. ap. Ethn.*

* The heart of Kings is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will. Sol. Pr. 21. 1.

tincture of enthusiasm) will find reason to be convinced, that they have, in several, and sometimes very remarkable instances, been under such an influence and conduct, and many events have occurred, of which no other account could be given. This being supposed, it will follow, that it is a most reasonable duty, not only to thank God for his kind and watchful providence over us, but also to pray to him for his gracious protection, guidance and blessing. But,

2. I would further observe, that as this objection proceeds upon the supposition of only a general providence, or a kind of fate, and implies in it the denial of any particular providential free interposition, in behalf of either particular nations or individuals, it betrays a very low, and most unworthy conception of the infinite Being; for it imports as tho' he either cannot or will not, so conduct the general course of his providence, as at the same time to attend to, provide for, and influence the affairs of particular nations, and communities of men (as is fit upon some special emergencies, either for correction, or retribution) and even of every individual person, in proportion to their several bad or good moral qualifications. Whereas it is certain, that his infinite wisdom and power must enable him, and his infinite benevolence and justice must, in all reason, be conceived to dispose him at once, equally to give attention to what concerns the whole of things, and at the same time to what relates to the case of every individual.

But lastly, supposing prayer should not procure any alteration in the course of providence (as for wise and good reasons, in many instances the case may be) it doth not follow but that several ends may be accomplished by it, particularly, as it cultivates and improves in our minds a great sense of God and our dependence upon him, and disciplines us to the exercise of an implicit faith in him, and a humble resignation to his all disposing will, and a greater concern to please him in all our moral conduct, that we may be the better qualified for future favors. But for further satisfaction on this head, I would wish the objector to read and consider well what Mr. Wollaston answers to this objection.

And lastly, it is objected, "That prayer implies a low and unworthy notion of the Deity, either as not knowing or not willing what is best for us of himself. Whereas it is impossible but that God must know what we want infinitely better than we do ourselves,

and must be disposed to do what is fit and best for us, without any information or importunity of ours."

To this I answer, it is very true, God knows what we want, and is disposed to do what is best for us; but as we are reasonable, free self-exerting creatures, and our true perfection and happiness is, in the nature of it, to be accomplished by our own activity, under the influence of the divine aid, in the use of proper means, it is not fit that he should prostitute his favors upon us, without our own activity in endeavoring to qualify ourselves for them. Since then, prayer, as I have shown, hath a direct and natural tendency to promote and improve in us all those moral qualifications that render it fit he should bestow his favors upon us, it is therefore fit in itself, and must accordingly be his will, that we should use this exercise as a means for our proficiency, and as a condition of his bestowments; just as it is fit that a kind parent who knows what is best for his child, and is sufficiently disposed to bestow it, should yet require him in a dutiful manner to ask it as a favor, as being a proper means to cultivate and improve in him all those dutiful and filial tempers, and that decent and obedient behavior which, as it contributes to his own happiness, does at the same time qualify him to receive his parent's favors.

It is therefore an utterly wrong notion of prayer, to imagine that the intent of it is to inform God of what he is ignorant of, or incline him to do what is best for us, as tho' he were not otherwise so disposed. No: the intent of it is, to keep up in our minds a lively and habitual sense of our dependence, and to qualify us to receive the blessings we pray for, by cultivating and improving in our souls all those dutiful tempers and dispositions of faith, hope, trust in Him, and submission to Him, and a concern above all things, to conform ourselves to his will, and the moral perfections of his nature, wherein our real perfection and happiness consists; and which are, in the nature of the things themselves, qualifications necessary to fit us to receive the favors we ask for, and without which we should never answer the end of our being.

Thus I think I have answered, or obviated every objection that hath been offered against the duty of prayer; arguing only from the reason and nature of things, to which I was confined by the argumentations of the objector, who, by one expression he has, seems to think we have no other way of coming to the knowledge

of our duty but by reasoning. But, alas! What a very little would mankind ever have known about the reason and nature of things, especially divine things, without divine instruction? When indeed, we are instructed in the first rudiments of the knowledge of God and ourselves, and our relation and duty to Him and one another, the connections that obtain in the nature of things between those truths and duties, will, to a thinking person, be demonstratively obvious; as Solomon observes, Wisdom is easy to him that understandeth, *i. e.*, having learned it by teaching. And this, I apprehend, is the reason that we have now so many fine demonstrations of religion and morality, which have so blown us up with a conceit of the sufficiency of our own reason, that we are apt to imagine we could have discovered all these truths and duties of ourselves without any divine teaching; whereas the truth is, without having first had the data in Scripture given us, we should scarce ever have had a thought of them, much less been able to demonstrate them by the dint of our weak reason.

What a miserable hand, mankind would have made of reasoning from the nature of things, without divine teaching or revelation, is abundantly evident from fact, to whoever looks into the real state of those millions of people, where the ancient original instructions have in a great measure, been gradually lost, and for want of which they are, in fact, sunk into such an abject condition of ignorance and depravity, as is hardly to be conceived by us, who have had the inestimable advantage of divine teaching. It is true, there were some extraordinary men in the heathen world, that did attain to the knowledge of many sublime truths and duties. But from facts which there is no disputing, there is the greatest reason to conclude that they would scarce ever have thought of them, if it had not been for some remains of the original divine instructions handed down to them from the beginning, by tradition. For it is to tradition that they frequently ascribe their best notions, which they picked up in their travels, far and wide among the wisest and most ancient nations the Chaldeans, Egyptians and Phenicians, whose notions were still so much better by how much the older, and the nearer they approached to the fountain head, and by how much the nearer connections they had with that nation, among whom those original divine instructions were handed down by writing, together with the ancient sacred hieroglyphics. See Shuckford's Connection, and Hutchinson's Works.

We have in particular some fine passages in Plato, Tully, Seneca, and others, relating to the subjects before us, our dependence on the divine aids, and the duty of prayer. Plato in *Menone* says, "Virtue does not derive from nature, nor teaching, but from a divine influence." Tully in *Nat. Deor.* says, "We must believe that no good man was ever such, but by the assistance of God, and that no one was ever a great man without a divine inspiration or influence." And Seneca, Ep. 41. says, No one is a good man without God, and that there is no good mind or disposition without him." Ep. 71. And accordingly he directs with regard to prayer, Ep. 10. "That we should first beg of God a good understanding, and good health of the soul, and then that of the body." Plato wrote an excellent dialogue, his 2nd Alcibiades, merely upon the subject of prayer, wherein he introduces Socrates (who was the oracle of wisdom in those days) as highly commending that prayer of an ancient poet, "That God would give us those things that are really good for us, whether we ask them or not; and that he would by no means grant us those things that are bad, however so earnestly we should desire them." In short it doth not appear that any of the wisest and greatest men, even in the heathen world (none but a few atheists) ever doubted but that prayer is an indispensable duty. All their difficulty was to know what they ought to pray for, and how they should pray acceptably. Here indeed Socrates laments the darkness they were under, and judges it a thing of so much importance, that he is persuaded God will send some great person to instruct mankind how to perform this duty.

Now I would ask our objector, did these great men discover these things by their own reasoning and the mere light of nature? If so, it is plain that prayer must be a duty not only evidently founded in nature, but discoverable by mere reason, and consequently be a most reasonable duty, so that it must be flying in the face of reason to doubt it, or neglect it. On the other hand, if (as I rather think) they had these things by tradition derived down originally from divine instruction, (tho' when taught they appeared entirely agreeable to reason) this proves that such an original divine instruction and injunction there was; and if so, it must be a direct rebellion against Heaven, as well as reason, to hesitate about it, and not live in the due performance of it.

Whatever therefore some men may think, it yet remains a most certain truth, that God hath from the beginning, and thro' all ages

since, at sundry times and in divers manners, instructed mankind in these affairs, and expressly declared his will and our duty relating to them. It is indeed a thing of most melancholy consideration, that this should become a matter of doubt, as it is, with many in this degenerate age, which, as it has sadly forsaken God, seems to be abandoned by him! Nay, some have peremptorily concluded against it, while others most ungratefully make a mere joke of it, and treat it with the utmost contempt. However, I can't but earnestly wish that gentlemen would once again seriously return to the consideration of this matter, and be persuaded to think it, at least possible, that they may be misled: that it is a most fatal thing for them, if they be: and that it is, therefore, infinitely worth the while for them, again to inquire with candor, and without prejudice or partiality, into this important affair. Particularly I would wish them to read and consider with the utmost exactness, some things that have been written of late years, and particularly Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, Bishop Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, and President Forbes's *Works*, Doctor Ellis *Of the Knowledge of Divine Things*, and a late piece called *Deism Revealed*, and Clayton, etc., against Bolingbroke, not to mention West, Leland,* Browne, and several others, all which have written long since it seems by many to have been inconsiderately taken for granted that all pretences to revealed religion are mere impostures.

And before I take my leave of this subject, I will venture to offer a short sketch of argumentation *a priori*, from the divine attributes, and the nature of things, to prove, that there must have been, and consequently that in fact there most certainly was, from the beginning, a divine revelation or instruction given to mankind. And,

1. I presume I may take it for granted, that mankind were at first brought into being by an infinitely wise and good God.

2. They must therefore have been made for a wise and good end. Now, as I have observed above,

3. This end must have been, that they might be happy, or in some good degree enjoy themselves. And,

4. It is a maxim of eternal truth, that he that wills an end, if he be wise and good, must, of course, will the means necessary for the accomplishment of that end. Now,

* Leland has lately, by the piety and charity of the good young Prince of Wales, been sent in great numbers into America, to prevent our apostacy.

5. Look into the nature of man, and consider what must be the necessary means of his well-being, and you will find, he must as a social creature have some language, and as an animal he must know what is proper food and other means for his subsistence, and consequently know something of the nature of things about him. Nor can he be happy without knowing from thence something of the author of nature, his maker, and benefactor, his preserver, and governor, who must be his chief good, and consequently, how to conduct himself so as to be secure of his favor in conformity to all those moral laws, which, both with regard to his maker, himself, and his species, are in the nature of things, necessary to his happiness. Nor must he be ignorant of their sanctions, the happiness that will attend his obedience to them, and the misery that must result from his disobedience. But,

6. However so necessary these things and the knowledge of them are, as means to man's well-being and happiness, and however so perfect you may suppose his powers and faculties to have been, it is plain that when he first came into being he must have been totally ignorant of them. Now

7. It cannot, I think, be doubted, but that it was possible for God Almighty, either by himself or some other agent, to appear to the first of our species, and converse with them, and instruct them in the knowledge of all these things, so necessary to their well-being.

8. If therefore our Maker infinitely wise and good, designed our well-being and happiness as his end, it is demonstration that he must have immediately appeared, or somehow instructed the first of our species in the knowledge of all these necessary means in order thereunto, and put them within the reach of their power, and it must have been his will that they should make use of them to that end.

Can it then be imagined, that the infinitely wise and good father of mankind, would bring them into being and then desert them? Would he leave them to grope out the means of their well-being themselves, in pursuit of which they could not fail, without instruction, of making 10,000 fatal blunders? At best, if they could have at all subsisted, it must have been several ages before they could have beat out any thing of a tolerable scheme of life. It cannot therefore be, but they must have been immediately instructed and put into a state of moral government, according to the tenor of which they should behave themselves well or ill: be obedient or

disobedient to his instructions and injunctions, under the sanctions of life or death.

And when they had been surprised by a temptation into an act of disobedience, and so forfeited that immortality and happiness, they were designed for, and brought themselves into a state of mortality, sin and misery, such as we do in fact find ourselves in, is there not in this case, all imaginable reasons from the consideration of the same divine attributes, his wisdom and goodness, to conclude, that he would still consider them with compassion as his own offspring, tho' in a state of rebellion, and at the same time that he passed upon them the sentence of his justice, open a way for mercy to take place consistent with it, and discover to them the method and means for their recovery and restoration to that immortality and happiness which they lost by sin?

In order to this, which was the original end of their being, this new state into which they were reduced by sin, must, in the nature of it, necessarily require new truths to be discovered which they could no otherwise come to the knowledge of, and thence new means to be prescribed, and new duties enjoined. And as God must be infinitely the best judge what is best for us, what could be more fit than that we should wholly refer ourselves to him? And what better, or other method could be devised, than that he should treat with us sinners by a Mediator, and that we should be required by faith to look for pardon, mercy and acceptance, thro' the merits and intercession of that all-sufficient Mediator, upon condition of our sincere repentance, and return to our duty; and to depend on the aids of the Divine Spirit, to enable us to repent and reform, and to return to such a faithful and preserving obedience as our present frail condition will admit of, and such as is, in the nature of it, necessary to qualify us for his favors? And in such a state of the case, can it be, but that a constant course of prayer, for pardon and acceptance, and watchfulness against all temptations, must be prescribed, as the most apposite means for gaining the victory of sin, and a habit of new obedience, in order to that blessed end?

All these things do thus evidently appear *a priori* to be most fit and reasonable in themselves, from the consideration of the divine attributes, and the nature of things: but they also appear, *a posteriori*, to have been fact, from the account which the Holy Scriptures gives us of the origin of mankind, and the subsequent conduct

of God towards them. Indeed the first account of these things is very short, and not so particular as I have represented them, especially in our present translation, tho' they appear much more so, to one that understands the hieroglyphical nature of the most ancient original language and institutions, and manner of instruction, and interprets them as he ought, by the subsequent facts correspondent to them, both sacred and profane; the due consideration of all which, cannot fail of giving us the highest moral certainty, that the nature of the things (supposing them) are capable of. But doubtless, they were then much more particularly explained than is accounted for, in the very short history we have of them.

Upon the whole; I can't but think that whoever shall meekly and candidly consider the whole of things; the real condition of mankind, and the intrinsic excellency of the things themselves, discovered and taught in the Holy Scriptures; their real fitness to all our needs, and to all the purposes of virtue and happiness, which are the end of our being; and at the same time, the whole series of revelation from the beginning, thro' all the ancient ages, supported by a series of miracles and prophesies, and the exact correspondence of facts and events, must be convinced, that there hath been one uniform consistent scheme of religion and providence worthy of God, and fitted to the present condition of mankind, carrying on from the beginning of the world to this day, and to continue to the consummation of all things, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, in complete, unmixed, and endless happiness.

Now supposing the Holy Scriptures to be an express declaration of the will of God and our duty, it would be endless to take notice of all the passages wherein this duty of prayer is therein enjoined, and spoken of as practised by all good men, and the many great and precious promises which are made to the sincere and faithful performance of it. I shall only take notice of that passage of the Prophet, where God declares his readiness and purpose, to do what was requisite for the weal of his people. I have spoken it, and will do it, says he. But adds, I will yet for this be enquired of (or sought to) by the House of Israel, to do it for them (Ezek. 36. 37.). Which plainly intimates that which was always the great maxim of the divine conduct towards the children of men, *viz.*, that however ready he is to do us good, yet it is his will that we should exert ourselves, and pray to him to co-operate with us, and to grant us

what we want, as the condition of his bestowments. Not that he wants our homage for his own sake, but for our sakes, he requires it, because he knows it is highly beneficial to us, and the best means we can use, to render ourselves qualified for his favors. And this you have seen was accordingly the practice of all the great, wise, and good men of all ages, not only of the Patriarchs, Jews and Christians, but even of the heathens themselves.

Ought we not then severely to suspect ourselves, when we are tempted to go into conclusions so singular, whether we are not under some great delusion, and be very jealous, whether it may not be occasioned by too much affectation of singularity, or too much self-sufficiency, or sensuality, or some other wrong temper, which may have strangely warped and biassed our minds? Let us rather with all the wise and good, be content, and rejoice to be directed by God, who knows what are the best means to our best good, infinitely better than we do, and diligently make use of all the means that he hath appointed for that end. And let us be solicitously upon our guard, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, our chief and only good, and lest we justly fall under that censure which was unjustly thrown upon Job; Thou castest off fear, and restraineth prayer before God. Ch. 15. 4.

And if by any means we have been so unhappily misled, as to have our hearts, in any degree alienated from him, let us immediately and seriously bethink ourselves, and take the advice given him by one of his friends (22. 21.), Acquaint now thyself with God (which is to be done by reading his Holy Word, and conversing frequently with him in prayer), and be at peace with him (by the diligent exercise of prayer and vigilence in all well-doing), so shall good come unto thee; all that is really good, all that is best for thee here, and endless happiness hereafter. I conclude all with the excellent advice which King David gave his son, when he was going off the stage, 1 Cor. 28. 9. And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind; for if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.[4]

[4] There was also printed in this volume "A Letter to a Friend, relating to the same Subject. West-Chester, January 15, 1758." By S. Johnson. And "A Short Tract on Mysteries, written by a very worthy young Gentleman at Oxford." [The Editors.]

Title Page, Advertisement and Sermon III from a Sermon Book of July and August, 1766

Title Page

Six Sermons by way of Exposition of Psalm XXXVI, 5-10. Literally from the Hebrew.

5. Thy tender mercy, O Jehovah, is in the heavens; thy faithfulness reacheth unto the skies.
6. Thy justice is like the mountains of God, thy judgments are a great deep; Thou O Jehovah wilt save both man and beast.
7. How precious is thy tender mercy, O sacred Three; and the sons of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.
8. They shall be abundantly refreshed with the fatness of thine house; and thou wilt give them to drink of the river of thy pleasures.
9. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.
10. O extend thy loving kindness to them that acknowledge Thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

By S. J., D. D.

Advertisement

The chief view in publishing this little tract was to state the true nature of Christianity in such a manner from the Scriptures, as if possible may tend to preclude any further disputing about it and to induce us rather to agree in every part of it and to live conformable to it. For it was given us not as matter of speculation to be idly disputed about (as the manner is) but as a glorious system of facts * and rules, to be heartily believed and obeyed, and thereby to make us happy. If it may have this effect in any degree, may God have all the glory! It may also perhaps have some tendency to put our young clergy upon the earnest study of the Hebrew language and scriptures, which would open a more glorious view of the true

* For the doctrines of the Gospel ought to be considered as so many facts (rather than speculations) the modus of which we are not at all concerned to know, and therefore is not revealed.

Christian sense of those ancient oracles, than they could otherwise have; and convince them of the inconsistency of their professing to be interpreters of the divine oracles without being able to read them in their sacred originals, which only are strictly of divine authority. The author, being paralytic, with much difficulty wrote it after he was 70, and therefore never transcribed it; so that the infirmities of old age must be expected to attend it, and accordingly it needs to be considered with much candor, and to be read several times over, to take up the full sense of it.

Sermon III

V. 7. How precious is thy tender mercy, O Sacred Three, and the sons of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

[Text in Hebrew]

In order to explain this verse it is necessary I should first explain to you the reason of the translation I have given of it literally from the Hebrew; and this will show you at the same time, that Christianity has been the only religion of mankind ever since the fall, so far forth as they had any that could be called true religion, and consequently that the religion of the ancient patriarchs and Jews from the beginning and ours is one and the same, and therefore that it is Christianity or the religion of Christ that the psalmist sings in these divine odes, and so, as I said at first, we ought to explain and understand them. The translation in our Bible is, how excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! which tho' true, is not full to the original Christian sense. The translators were not aware, in those early times of the reformation, that the word they translate God, which evidently speaks of more than one, does really mean the Holy Trinity, which is the fundamental ground of Christianity. It was the Jewish rabbis that misled them, who, I doubt, went into this interpretation, on purpose to disguise their religion, by keeping the true original Christian sense of it out of sight; as they resolved to understand it of a temporal, and not of a spiritual salvation. Whereas, it was a spiritual salvation from Satan, sin and death, that was all along intended from the beginning to be signified by this divine name *Elohim*, which they render *God*, both here and generally in other places; but which has since been abundantly proved,*

* By Mr. Hutchinson and others.

really to mean the eternal sacred three (which in the N. T. are called Father, Son and Holy Ghost), confederated by oath to redeem fallen man from sin and death. It is the name *Jehovah*, which truly means the one self-existent eternal God, and this they have debased by translating it *Lord*. Moses you remember sets this down for the grand fundamental principle of all religion; Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Now this should have been rendered or at least explained agreeable to what I have now been saying: (which if it were done the word *God* may well enough be retained in the translation) Hear O Israel, Jehovah, the sacred Three, thy confederated Redeemers, is one Jehovah, which according to the language of the N. Testament is as much (as) to say, God our Saviors, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is one God; one eternal Jehovah in three persons. This was truly the doctrine and foundation of the Old Testament as well as the new, and indeed not so properly taught, as supposed in the N. Testament, to have been already known as the ground of all religion, and therefore our blessed Savior, without formally teaching it, orders his Disciples to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as the great badge of his religion. *v.* Postscript.

Thus I have shown you the true reason why I translate this text, how precious is thy tender mercy O sacred Three. It abundantly appears by comparing many texts of the Old and New Testament together that it was the Word or spiritual and divine nature of Christ united, who before his incarnation from the beginning was in the form of God; was truly the God of the patriarchs and the God of Israel, who often visibly appeared to the patriarchs from the beginning, and who during the Mosaic dispensation as the Psalmist tells us, dwelt between the cherubim, by the sacred incommunicable name *Jehovah*, in the tabernacle and temple which was the figure of the Body of Christ: and it was the very same divine person who in the fullness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, *i. e.*, he took our animal nature upon him and as the original imports, tabernacled * among us. Now these cherubim which he inhabited from the beginning at Eden, and between which he is said to dwell, have been, of late, very well proved to be an emblematical representation or hieroglyphic of the Holy Trinity, which was then doubtless particularly explained (being sensible

* ἐκδήνωσεν.

means of instructing in spiritual things). They consisted of one body to represent the unity of God, and three faces with six wings, to represent the trinity of persons in the one Godhead, the faces of an ox, of a lion, and of an eagle, which are the chief animals, to which was annexed the face of a man joined to the face of the lion, to represent the incarnation of Christ for our redemption, who is therefore called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Thus they are described by the prophet Ezekiel, ch. 1. Now let me remind you of a passage in the 138th Psalm, where the Psalmist says, I will worship towards thy holy temple (which was the custom in those times) in which the cherubim were placed. He begins the Psalm with these words, which will much confirm the interpretation I have now given of my text. I will praise Thee with my whole heart, before the Gods will I sing praise unto Thee. Now what can you think the Psalmist here means by the Gods, which is the same plural word that he uses in my text, and which they generally translate God? You cannot think he means the heathen many Gods? That would be absurd, that he should praise the true God before or in the presence of the false Gods. No; he means, that in worshipping towards the holy temple, he would praise Jehovah before the cherubim, as being a symbol of the holy trinity, the name of the persons signified being given to the sign, before the sacred Three, *i. e.*, before the cherubim, will I sing praise unto thee.

And now you see the great force and propriety of the expression in my text, thus understood, how precious is thy tender mercy, *i. e.*, thy redeeming love O Sacred Three, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? And how precious, how excellent indeed is this wondrous love beyond expression, beyond conception? That the Father of Mercies should enter into covenant with his Blessed Son and Holy Spirit, to redeem and recover miserable, rebellious fallen man! That he should make this glorious provision for us in his eternal decree, before we had a being and even before the world began! That the ever blessed Son of God, should, of his wondrous compassion for us, undertake to enter into our nature, and take upon him flesh and blood, and make a sacrifice of it to divine justice to make an atonement for our perverse rebellion, that we might escape God's tremendous wrath and be restored to his favor; and that the Holy Spirit of God should undertake to qualify us for an interest in the benefit of his redemption, by bringing us back to our duty by a

true repentance and a renewed obedience. That no sooner had we perpetrated this vile rebellion, but that glorious person, then in the form of God, sitting in judgment upon the rebels, should immediately discover this glorious purpose of mercy, by promising that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and teach and represent the whole scheme of this redeeming love by the sacred emblems of the cherubims and sacrifices, which were then instituted for that purpose, and continued together with the holy spirit of prophesy from that time forward, through all the subsequent ages, till the fulness of the time should come, when this great salvation should be actually accomplished. Thus God left not himself without a witness in every age and nation where sacrifice obtained, and especially among the chosen seed, to this his precious tender mercy, this redeeming and pardoning love to fallen mankind! And at length, according to the original promise, and the many prophesies from age to age, this glorious person made his actual appearance in our nature. He took upon him a body of the seed of woman literally, and actually made a sacrifice of it, being made a sin offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; or be pardoned, accepted and restored to favor and immortality in and through him. Thus was the Son of God manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and through death gain the victory of him, who by tempting man to rebellion had brought sin and death into this miserable world.

How excellent is thy loving kindness, thy redeeming love, O God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost! This is, at once both the Song of Moses (Exod. 15) and of the Lamb (Rev. 5) which do in effect import the same thing; for their deliverance from Egypt was a type of our redemption by Christ, so that it comes down from the beginning and runs on through both the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, down to the end of time; nay it will still continue on to the endless ages of eternity itself! Thus they sing the triumphs of redeeming love, great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints; who shall not fear Thee O Lord and glorify thy name. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory, and blessing. Thus to sing the victories of the Lamb and the glories of redeeming love will be the

most delightful exercise to eternal ages! But let us always remember, that in order to the enjoyment of this unspeakable, this inconceivable happiness, it is indispensably necessary that we be duly qualified for it, by living a persevering life of prayer and watchfulness, in the mortification of sin, and bringing forth all those good fruits of virtue, of righteousness, and true holiness whereby our heavenly Father may be glorified; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord; if we have not devoted ourselves to God in Jesus Christ, to the love and practice of whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely and of a good report, we can bear no part, nor have any lot or portion in these heavenly joys. Let us then make it the great concern and business of our whole lives, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

And indeed without thus devoting ourselves to God our heavenly Father through his blessed Son Jesus Christ, to be renewed and sanctified and led his Holy Spirit, we can have no true enjoyment of ourselves even in this our present state; for it is in this method alone, that the sons of men can be qualified to put their trust under the shadow of his wings. To put our trust under the shadow of God's wings, or words to that effect, are expressions frequently used in Holy Scripture. Thus in Ruth 2, 12, Under whose wings thou art come to trust, and Ps. 17, 8, Hide me under the shadow of thy wings. Ps. 63, 7, In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice, and so in several other places. Now these and the like expressions are allusions to the outstretched wings of the cherubims, some of which were stretched inward over the mercy seat, where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled, to represent the protection of the divine mercy and redeeming love, to secure us from the enslaving and condemning power of sin and death, and others were stretched outward towards the walls of the temple to represent the protection of God's good providence over the world and the church. So that this expression implies both the temporal and spiritual protections and salvations of the infinite goodness and mercy of almighty God, displayed not only in the Gospel of his grace, but also in the conduct of his providence towards those that put their trust in him. And these are indeed most precious and inestimable benefits, that by means of this glorious exhibition of redeeming goodness and

mercy, we may now, as the Apostle says, go boldly to the throne of grace, to seek for grace and mercy to help us in time of need. So that, as the Psalmist says, at what time we are afraid, we may put our trust in him; at what time we are afraid either of the power or guilt of sin, or of any temptations to it, or of any dangers we are exposed to in the way of our duty; nay if we are afraid even of death itself, provided we are but found in the way of well-doing, we may safely put our trust under the shadow of his wings, and say with that good man, Job, tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him: I will trust in him for pardon, favor and acceptance thro' the blood of Jesus and his all-perfect and meritorious righteousness and intercession, and tho' I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, having his rod and his staff to comfort me, and a blessed immortality before me.

The cherubims, exhibiting the redeeming mercy of God, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity with their wings stretched out over the mercy seat, were placed, we know, in the holy of holies, or most holy place which was within the veil. It was in allusion to this that the Apostle in the 6th to the Hebrews, speaking of our faith and hope in the great and precious promises of God, confirmed by his oath, saith, we have strong consolation who have fled for a refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil, *i. e.*, entering into and resting in that glorious display of the infinite goodness and mercy of God which was represented by those sacred symbols which were placed within the veil of the temple. Hence it appears plain that as the cherubims obtained immediately after the fall and so downward, through all the ages of the patriarchial and Jewish church exhibiting the whole scheme of redeeming mercy to fallen man, till the redeemer came and actually accomplished what was represented by them; it is, I say, hence plain that the faith, hope and trust of good men and their obligations to renewed obedience, and consequently all the main principles of religion have been the same ever since the fall down to this day and will always remain. Thus is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. This is plain from Hebrews 11, 12, and 13 chapters.

As therefore the ancients ever put their trust under the shadow of God's wings, the outstretched wings of his redeeming mercy in

Jesus Christ, then exhibited in those sacred symbols, but yet to be accomplished, let our trust be the same with theirs. They by faith beheld things at a distance, and through dusky shadows, whereas we behold them actually accomplished, and completed; but the great object of their faith and ours is one and the same, and we and they are one and the same church, the same family and household of God, and shall be gathered at last together into the one grand community, in the heavenly inheritance of the saints in light; the innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, under Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, and God, the judge of all. In the meantime as we have vastly the advantage of them, proportionably greater improvement and proficiency will in all reason be expected of us. As we all with open face, under the Gospel behold the glories of redeeming love, let us so much the more be changed into the same image from glory to glory.

Let us then, my brethren, most thankfully and most devoutly sing with the holy Psalmist, how precious is thy tender mercy O God, O Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who hast concerted and opened to us such a glorious method of free grace, that we the poor fallen children of men, may put our trust under the shadow of thy wings; that with full assurance of hope of the renovation of our souls by the spirit of thy grace and of pardon, favor and acceptance with thee through the blood and merits and intercession of the blessed Jesus, the Lamb of God that was slain from the foundation of the world, to take away the sins of miserable mankind, and to restore them to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away! For this let us daily labor and spare no pains to qualify ourselves, by being not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove and experience what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, which will finally make us meet to be partakers of that eternal inheritance of the saints in light; that glory, honor, and immortality, that shall be the portion of all that are faithful to the end of their days.

A Postscript or Note to Sermon III, to Be Read after the First Page of It

As Moses uses this plural name *Elohim*, for *God*, in the first verse of Genesis, applied to the singular verb *created*, it can hardly

be doubted but that he designed by that manner of speaking to assert that the world was made by one God in three persons, and to intimate to us, that the same three sacred persons who were the joint redeemers of the world after the fall, were the joint creators of it at the beginning. Hence this plural name being used all along throughout that chapter, when the sacred three are about to produce man, their chief work in this lower world, who was to be the lord of all the creatures here below; it is to be remarked as a proof of this, that in v. 26, they are represented as deliberating with each other in the plural number, saying, Let Us make Man in Our image after Our likeness. And the name Jehovah which has no plural, and means the one eternal self-existing being, is not used till the fourth verse which ought to be reckoned the first verse of the second chapter, (and so afterwards) where it is said, The Lord God, *i. e.*, Jehovah the sacred Three, made the earth and the heavens, *i. e.*, Jehovah with his word and spirit, which are often mentioned in the Old Testament.

And it may be further remarked, that the same sacred plural name of God, in several other places of Holy Scripture (at least 12) which are most of them particularly explained by Mr. Jones in his most excellent Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, Ch. 3. p. 50, is joined with plural pronouns, verbs and adjectives (tho' generally with singulars to intimate the unity). Thus to mention two or three: When the great work of confounding the idolatrous design and language was to be done at the building of Babel, Gen. 11, 7, God, the Sacred Three, says, Let Us go down and confound this language. So in Gen. 35, 7, it is said, God appeared to Jacob. In the Hebrew it is אלהים. The Sacred Three, כנלן, were discovered to him, when he fled from the face of his brother. And in that passage Psal. 58, *ult.* Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. In the Hebrew it is, There is an Alohim, a Sacred Three, meaning the joint redeemers that are שפטים, Judges in the earth. Hence doubtless, it is in allusion to the three joint creators of the world in Gen. 1, 1, that Solomon in Eccl. 12, 1, exhorts children to remember their creators in the days of their youth: So it is in the original plural, כוראיר.

From these and the like observations, it seems not improbable that when the Psalmist in Psal. 14, 1, says, The fool hath said in his heart there is no God, or no Elohim, the meaning is, not that this fool doubted whether there is any Jehovah or not, that is, whether

there is an eternal self-existing being, the one cause of all things, for that seems impossible, unless it could be supposed that he was so stupid as to believe that this glorious show of nature could come into being without any cause at all. But it is probable that by this expression he meant to intimate that there were then, as there are now, some that were such fools as to apostatize from the original revelation of the glorious scheme of redemption, by the joint co-operation of the sacred three, confederated by oath to accomplish our salvation from sin and death; which was doubtless made known from the beginning much more clearly than has been commonly thought, and inculcated from age to age, and particularly by the hieroglyphics and sacred rites of the Mosaic law. But I question whether there were so many apostates in Israel then as there are now, in this abandoned age, within the Christian pale, who tho' the redemption has been actually accomplished, are such stupid wretched fools as to deny the Lord that bought them and scoff at his holy religion, or at least despise and neglect giving any attention at all to it, though they profess to believe and even to be certain that there is one God, the cause and author of all things, such as Ld. Bolingbroke, etc.

Whoever would examine these things, (and certainly they deserve to be thoroughly inquired into) would do well to study both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in the use of Mr. Parkhurst's Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, and to read Lord President Forbes's *Thoughts on Religion* (which though only two little pocket volumes, I humbly think, give more light in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures than is to be found in some large folios), together with Mr. Spearman's *Inquiry and Five Letters*, and then Mr. Hutchinson's *Works* (the first author of these inquiries), which were three very great lay gentlemen; not to mention several learned and devout clergymen who have illustrated and defended them. I do not say that I am fully convinced of all their criticisms and opinions; But I must say that I think Mr. Hutchinson hath given the best account of the origin of both philosopy and religion and of idolatry, the corruption of it, that I have met with. And the philosophical part of them (which is the philosophy of the Holy Scriptures). has been very well confirmed by the experiments and reasonings of the excellent Mr. Jones (author of *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*), in his *Essay on the Principles of Natural Philosophy*: who, though he disputes the great Sr. Isaac's attraction and

vacuum, he does by no means exclude his mathematical reasoning; but (as Sr. Isaac wishes) only goes on where he left off, to account for gravity, etc., by the operations of light and the most subtle spirit that pervades all nature.

Part VII

LITURGICAL WRITINGS

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1. The Creed or Summary of the Christian Faith ---- 1720
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THE CREED OR SUMMARY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH[1] PUT INTO THE MOST FAMILIAR AND EASY EXPRESSIONS

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things in them, and preserveth and governeth them all.

And I believe in Jesus Christ, His only eternal Son of God, that he became man and taught us the will of God and died for us to redeem us from sin and death, and rose again from the dead and ascended up into Heaven and is now alive at the right hand of God where He liveth forever, and pleadeth our cause, and will come again at the last day to be our judge.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, who is our comforter and guide through the temptations and troubles of this life, to the happiness of the life to come.

And I believe one Catholic Church of all Christian people throughout the world whom we are to love as our brethren.

And I believe one baptism for the remission of sins and look for the resurrection of the dead and the everlasting life of the world to come.

Amen.

[1] Appended to the manuscript of the *Logic*, 1720. [The Editors.]

A / SHORT / CATECHISM / FOR / YOUNG CHILDREN: / Proper to be taught them, / Before they learn The Assembly's, or after they / have learned the Church Catechism. / THE FOURTH EDITION. / (FIFTH) / (CORRECTED and AMENDED.)[2] / BY S. JOHNSON, D. D. / Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is / old, he will not depart from it. Prov. / New-York: / Printed by J. HOLT, near the Exchange, in Broad Street. / M,DCC,LXV. /

As it is highly necessary that children be taught the first principles of the oracles of God at the same time that they are learning the first rudiments of their language, it is thought very expedient that this Catechism be bound up with their *English Grammar*.

A Short Catechism

Question 1. Who made you, and all the world?

A. God Almighty made me, and every thing else, both in heaven and earth.

Q. 2. Who keeps you alive every moment, and provides meat and drink for you, and every thing else that you want?

A. The same Almighty God that made me, and that preserves and governs the whole world.

Q. 3. Who is God Almighty?

A. He is a great and glorious spirit, who is present every where, and sees and knows all things, and can do whatsoever he pleases; and is most wise and good, just and merciful, true and faithful in all his conduct towards us.

Q. 4. What relation then do you stand in to God?

A. As he is our creator, and father, we are his creatures and

[2] The corrections and amendments which Johnson inserted in his copy for the proposed fifth edition, are here embodied in the text. The changes consist merely of slight verbal emendations.

This Catechism forms the second Appendix to the *First Easy Rudiments of Grammar Applied to the English Tongue.* [The Editors.]

children; and as he is our king and governor, we are his subjects and servants.

Q. 5. What did God make you for?

A. To serve and please him; and to be for ever happy in so doing.

Q. 6. What then must you do to please God, and be happy?

A. I must fear God and keep his commandments.

Q. 7. What is implied in this?

A. That as we are his creatures, children and servants, we must fear and love him with all our hearts, we must worship him every day, and put our whole trust in him; we must submit to his will, and learn to be like him in all purity and holiness, and be just, true and faithful, kind and merciful one to another, as he is to us.

Q. 8. What then are those things that God forbids?

A. All idolatry, neglect of his worship, and profaning his holy name by cursing and swearing; all disobedience to parents, kings, magistrates and ministers; all murder, quarreling and uncleanness; all stealing, lying and covetousness, and all gluttony, drunkenness and excess.

Q. 9. Why does God forbid these things?

A. Because they are hurtful and ruinous to us both in soul and body. And as he is our king and judge, he will call us to give an account of ourselves, and reward us gloriously if we are obedient, and punish us terribly, if we are disobedient.

Q. 10. Is not therefore all sin or disobedience to his holy laws a most heinous evil in the sight of God?

A. Most certainly, for he has declared his hatred and abhorrence of it and his resolution to punish it.

Q. 11. What then is your duty, as to sin?

A. To hate it as the worst of evils, as God does; to repent and be sorry for it; to resolve and endeavor always to forsake it; and to watch against all temptations to it.

Q. 12. How came mankind to be such a sinful and miserable race?

A. We fell from God in our first parents, who, abusing their liberty, yielded to the temptation of the devil, and sinned against him, by eating the forbidden fruit; and we have followed them in their rebellion.

Q. 13. Wherein do you behold God's anger against the sin and rebellion of mankind?

A. In all the pain, trouble, sickness and death that we see and feel in the world.

Q. 14. Why did God inflict these calamities upon us?

A. To punish our iniquities, and make us see the evil of them, and bring us to repentance.

Q. 15. Did not God leave mankind then to perish in this condition?

A. No, but of his infinite mercy sent a redeemer to recover us.

Q. 16. Who is the redeemer of mankind from sin and death?

A. Jesus Christ.

Q. 17. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. The only begotten Son of God, very God and very man, and sent by him to be the savior of the world.

Q. 18. What did Christ do to save the world?

A. In great pity to us, he took our nature upon him, he was born of a pure virgin; he instructed us in the true knowledge of God, and our duty; and died for us, to satisfy for our sins, to redeem us out of the hands of God's justice, and procure, ascertain and offer to us mercy, pardon and acceptance here, and eternal life hereafter.

Q. 19. On what terms does he offer these great blessings?

A. On condition that we heartily believe in him, and confide in his meritorious obedience and sufferings; that we sincerely repent of our sins, and forsake them, and return to our duty, and that we be faithful in the performance of it to the end of our lives.

Q. 20. You cannot do these things without help; how do you expect to be enabled to perform these conditions and duties?

A. By the help of God's Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is sent by Christ to assist and strengthen us.

Q. 21. How are you entitled to his assistance?

A. Christ having purchased it for us by his death has assured us that if we believe in him, and being deeply sensible of our inability, do pray for his help with all our hearts, sincerely repenting of all our sins, and returning to our duty, he will give us his Holy Spirit to renew us and enable us to will and to do what he requires of us, and to withstand all temptations.

Q. 22. What assurance have you of the truth of all these things?

A. Besides the fulfilment of the prophecies in Christ, and the

many miracles which he wrought, such as healing all manner of diseases, and even raising the dead at a word speaking; after he was crucified for us, he arose to life again within three days; and forty days after that, he ascended up into heaven, from whence he sent down the Holy Ghost on his disciples, and enabled them to work the like miracles.

Q. 23. Where is he now?

A. He is alive, at the right hand of God, with all power in heaven and in earth, where he ever lives and pleads with God in our behalf.

Q. 24. What remains for him yet to do?

A. God has appointed him to raise the dead, and judge the world.

Q. 25. What then is your belief and expectaion as to these things?

A. That at the end of this present world, he will raise me to life again, and judge me according to my behavior in this life.

Q. 26. What do you look for then after this life?

A. If I have faithfully endeavored to serve God, and do my duty, and, behave myself well all my days; he will then (not for any desert of mine, but) through his free grace and the merits of Christ alone, receive me up to heaven to live with him, and be happy forever.

Q. 27. But what if you go on in wicked courses, and will not be reformed?

A. I can expect no other than to be condemned to hell, and there to be punished forever, with most terrible and amazing torments.

Q. 28. I hope therefore you are seriously resolved to forsake all sin and wickedness, and to be God's faithful and obedient servant as long as you live?

A. Yes, verily, by God's grace, I am so resolved.

Q. 29. What other obligations are you under to consider, believe and do in all these things?

A. According to Christ's appointment, I am baptised with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Q. 30. What is the meaning of this?

A. That I am hereby dedicated and devoted to the one true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; to God, the Father, who created me, and to his only Son, who redeemed me, and to his Holy Spirit, who sanctifieth me; and so obliged to renounce the devil and all sin

and wickedness; to believe in God, and so serve him and to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

Q. 31. What are the benefits you are hereby entitled to on these conditions?

A. To be in God's favor as one of his children here, and to have an interest in his heavenly inheritance hereafter.

Q. 32. And are you resolved to be true to your baptismal covenant and obligations, and to ratify and confirm what was done in your name when you was baptised, and to make it your own free act and deed?

A. By God's grace I am resolved so to do.

Q. 33. In what manner particularly, are you to renew, ratify and confirm your covenant obligations?

A. By renewing my baptismal vows, at confirmation,* and frequently partaking of the Lord's Supper, according to Christ's appointment.

Q. 34. What does that ordinance mean?

A. It is a public, solemn, and religious eating bread, and drinking wine, in remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, wherein the bread represents his body, and the wine his blood.

Q. 35. What does this action imply?

A. The receiving of Christ and all the spiritual blessings he purchased by his death, namely, pardon, grace and eternal life.

Q. 36. What qualifications are necessary to entitle you to have these blessings sealed to you in this ordinance?

A. True repentance of all my sins, for which he died; a lively faith in his blood and merits as my only atonement; a most thankful sense of his dying love; and a steadfast, holy resolution to live to him, who died for me, and rose again; and to live in perfect charity with all men.

Q. 37. What then must you do to prepare yourself for the acceptable receiving of this ordinance?

A. I must thoroughly examine myself, and see to it that I come with all these qualifications.

Q. 38. And are you seriously resolved to give all diligence thus to prepare yourself, and come to this holy ordinance?

A. By God's grace I am so resolved.

Q. 39. Who are they that have a right to administer these holy

* See the Prayer Book on Confirmation, and consider it well.

ordinances which are called sacraments or seals of the Covenant of Grace?

A. Those only who, according to Christ's appointment, are lawfully ordained ministers of the Gospel.

Q. 40. Where do you learn all these great doctrines and duties of religion?

A. In the Holy Scriptures, which are the Word of God, and the only certain rule of faith and life given us to make us wise unto salvation.

Q. 41. What is your duty with respect to the Word of God?

A. To read and study it daily, to attend constantly on the public preaching of it, to treasure it up in my heart, and practice it in my life.

Q. 42. What must you do in order to obtain God's grace to enable you to live according to his Word?

A. I must live in the constant and diligent exercise of prayer; I must praise God every day for all his benefits, and pray to him for every thing I want both for soul and body; I must be constantly present at his public worship, with serious and reverent attention, and keep the Lord's Day holy, and be ready to every good work.

Q. 43. What prayer ought you to use in particular every day?

A. The Lord's Prayer.

Q. 44. Let me hear if you can say the Lord's Prayer.

A. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Q. 45. Let me also hear you give the sum of your faith into which you was baptised, as it is expressed in the Apostle's Creed.

A. I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell: the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of

saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Q. 46. Let me also hear you give an account of the sum of your duty both toward God and your neighbor, as it is contained in the Ten Commandments.

A. God spake these words and said,

I. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods but me.

II. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and show mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day. Six days shalt thou labor and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

V. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt do no murder.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shall not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

End of the Catechism

PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN [3]

The First for Those That Are Very Young

I humbly thank thee, O most gracious Father of mercies, for all thy goodness towards me, both to soul and body, for time and eternity; and above all, that thou hast sent thy only Son, Jesus Christ, to save me from sin and death, and thy Holy Spirit to sanctify me. I thank thee especially for preserving me this day (night); I pray thee forgive me all my sins, and keep me this night (day) under thy gracious protection, and always in thy fear and favor; keep me from all sin and calamity, and grant me the help of thy Holy Spirit to serve and please thee faithfully all my days, and bring me to everlasting life through Jesus Christ, my only Savior, in whose holy name and words I commend myself, my friends, and all thy people, to thy most gracious favor, protection and blessing.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Second for Those That Are More Advanced, While at Schools or Colleges

O God our heavenly Father, I humbly adore thy glorious majesty, as my creator and preserver, my king and my judge. I acknowledge I have been a sinful and perverse creature, and beseech thee to make me deeply sensible of my many sins and offences; and help me to repent in earnest, to be heartily sorry for them, and forsake them, and to return to my duty, and be more watchful for the time to come.

2. And I humbly entreat thee, O Father of Mercies, for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's Sake, to forgive me and to receive me to thy favor, and grant me the help of thy Holy Spirit to enable me to be faithful to my baptismal covenant, to renounce the Devil and all

[3] These prayers were also included in "The Form of Morning and Evening Prayers to be used in Families." [The Editors.]

his works, to believe in thee my God, and to love and serve thee with all my heart, to obey my parents and governors, and love my neighbors, and do good to all men.

3. Let me always consider that thou seest my heart, and that I must give an account to thee of all my behavior. Let me therefore abhor lying, stealing, evil-speaking and filthiness, and all sorts of wickedness, and watch against my passions and youthful lusts, and all temptations.

4. Let me be very faithful and diligent in my learning and business: and I humbly beseech thee, O my God, if it may be thy blessed will, to give me health and prolong my life, and make me an instrument of promoting thy glory, and doing much good in my generation.

5. And I entreat thee, O lord, to have compassion upon all mankind, and bless thy church and people throughout the world, especially in our nation, and this land. Let all orders of men, both in church and state, faithfully discharge their duty in their several stations, and thy blessing attend their labors. Pity and relieve the many afflicted; and bless my parents (or guardians) and teachers, and prosper and reward all their care and pains for my best good. Bless my brothers and sisters (if any, or either of them) and all my friends. Let us all be thy faithful and obedient children and servants, all our days, and meet together at last, and be happy for ever in thy heavenly kingdom.

6. I humbly thank thee, O my good God, for all thy tender and fatherly care of me, and kindness towards me; for my being and preservation, my life and health, my food and raiment, and all the blessings of this life: but above all, I thank thee for thy wondrous love, in sending thy blessed Son Jesus Christ, to redeem and save me, and thy Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify me; for my baptism, and all the means of grace and education; for thy patience towards me hitherto, and particularly for preserving me the night (or day) past.

7. I beseech thee, forgive me wherein soever I have offended the pure eyes of thy glory, in thought, word or deed; and keep me this day (or night) in thy fear, and under thy most gracious care and protection; and be my God for ever and ever, and my guide even unto death; all which, and whatsoever else thou seest needful for soul and body, both for me and my friends, and all thy people; I humbly beg of thee, through the merits and mediation of thy

blessed Son, Jesus Christ, comprehending them with myself, in those holy words which he hath taught us,

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Another Prayer to Be Used by a Little Child

(From *The New-Year's Gift Complete*)

O Lord, my most loving Savior and merciful Redeemer, who commandest that little children should come unto thee, and didst take them up in thine arms, lay thy hands upon, and bless them; look graciously upon me, who am one of thy children devoted to thy service. Have compassion on the weakness of my tender years, and keep me from all evil and danger, both in body and soul; make me always mindful of my creator in the days of my youth, and of that baptismal vow that was made in my name. That I should forsake (renounce) the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Make me dutiful to my parents, loving to my relations, obedient to my governors and instructors, and courteous and humble to all, that as I grow in years, I may grow in grace and wisdom, and be in favor with God and man. Guide and sanctify me by thy Holy Spirit, that the longer I live, the better I may be, to the comfort of my parents, the honor and glory of Thee, my God, and my own happiness both here and hereafter; and this I beg, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

Grace before Meat

We beseech thee, O Lord, to forgive our sins, and bless these thy creatures to our use, and give us grace to use them to thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace after Meat

We humbly thank thee, O lord, for these and all thy blessings temporal and spiritual, and beseech thee give us grace to live to thy glory; and pity the afflicted for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE END

A Draught of the Christian Religion

Religion consists in knowing of God and serving Him; and is treated of:

I. In general:
   1. The necessity of it and of the being of God as the foundation of it.
   2. The truth of the Christian religion above all others.
   3. The truth and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures as its rule.

II. In particular the parts of religion are:
   1. Knowledge and faith — the truths of religion.
      A. In general and of the Creed.
      B. In particular, the parts are:
         a. Faith in God, his being and attributes, creation and providence and the fall.
         b. Faith in Christ, his person, offices, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, judgment.
         c. Faith in the Holy Ghost, the Church, remission of sins, resurrection and eternal life.
   2. Practice or obedience to the duties of religion; which are:
      A. General;
         a. Repentance.
         b. Good works.
      B. Particular; which are
         a. Necessary or moral; which are three-fold:
            (1) To God
                Love, honor, fear, trust, submission, worship and prayer.
            (2) To man
                Justice and truth, charity and mercy and relative duties.
            (3) To ourselves
                Sobriety, purity, moderation, humility, meekness, patience.
         b. Instituted;
            (1) Baptism.
            (2) Lord's Supper.
            (3) Ministry.

A / COMMON PLACE / FOR THE / CHIEF HEADS / OF / DIVINITY / Reduced into the / best and most natural method / that I can any where yet find, / chiefly following Dr. J. Scott's *Christian Life* / which I think to be the most methodical / and compendious treatise yet extant. / Collected January 22, 1719/20. / The Sum of the Christian Religion.

N. B. The design of this scheme of religion is that the whole of all the doctrines and duties of it might appear in a short compass and be beheld in a more direct view, and for the better methodizing of my thoughts upon every particular subject, and thereby for the assisting of my memory. And tho' in a few places I have a little reworded from the author's method, yet for the most part I have expressed it in his own words.

RELIGION CONTAINS both the

- Duties which are the matter of our practice, and these are
  - Immediate as in all the virtues, which are
    - Human
    - Divine
    - Social
  - Mediate, as for the promoting of virtue in us, such as
    - Initiative
    - Progressive
    - Perfective
- And the Doctrines which are matters of belief and are the principles obliging us to practice. Doctrines of our religion relate to
  1. God, the object of religion.
  2. Creation of the world.
  3. Providence.
  4. Future state.
  5. The doctrine of the Mediator which is revealed religion.

The Sum of the Christian Religion

Religion is concerned in the regulation of our actions. All human actions are either necessary or sinful or indifferent.

1. The necessary are such as are commanded by God.

2. The sinful such as are forbidden.
3. The indifferent are neither commanded nor forbidden, but left entirely to our choice and discretion.

Again the necessary and sinful actions are either moral or positive.

1. The moral actions are commanded or forbidden on the account of some intrinsic good or evil that is inseparable to their natures.
2. The positive are such as are indifferent in their own natures, as to any good or evil inherent in themselves, but are made necessary or sinful by some positive command or prohibition superinduced upon them.

Good is twofold: absolute or respective, the good of the end or the good of the means.

1. The good of the end is that which is the perfection and happiness of any being.
2. The good of the means is that which tends or conduces thereunto. And this is natural or moral.
    1. The natural good is what tends to the perfecting of man's sensitive nature. And
    2. The moral good is that which tends to the perfecting of his rational nature.

And these might be more properly termed his sensitive and rational good. These distinctions premised, there are three propositions to be cleared up.

I. That there is such an intrinsic moral goodness inherent in some human actions as renders them forever necessary and obliging to us. This appears in the following propositions:
    1. The happiness of human nature is founded in the perfection of it.
    2. The perfection of human nature consists in acting suitably to the most perfect reason.
    3. The most perfect reason is that wherein all reasonable beings do agree.
    4. There are certain rules of moral good wherein all reasonable beings are agreed.
    5. To act suitably to those rules of moral good hath been always found by universal experience to be conducive to the happiness of human nature, and the contrary mischievous to it.

II. That God hath sufficiently discovered to us what those human actions are, which are morally good and therefore perpetually obliging

1. In that He hath implanted in us a natural desire of happiness.
2. In that He hath given us reason to discover what actions they are that make for our happiness and what not.
3. In that He hath so contrived our natures as that we are disposed by our own instincts and passions to those actions that make for our own happiness.
4. He hath taken care to oblige and excite us to those actions by annexing natural rewards to them, and natural punishments to their contraries.
5. To these natural rewards and punishments He hath frequently superadded supernatural blessings and judgments.
6. To inforce all this, He hath made sundry supernatural revelations wherein He hath plainly taught us what those things are that carry in them this intrinsic goodness.

III. That those actions which carry in them this perpetual obligation are the main and principal parts of religion. This appears in that

1. The Scriptures plainly declare that the great design of all the doctrines of religion is to move and persuade us to the practice of this moral goodness. 2 Tit. 12.
2. The main drift and scope of all the positive duties of religion hath been always to improve us in moral goodness.
3. God expresses a great contempt of all the positive duties of religion when separated from moral goodness. As 1 Isai.
4. Wherever we find the whole of religion summed up in a few particulars, they are always instances of moral goodness. 12 Mark, 30, etc.
5. The character of those persons which have been most dear and acceptable to God is always taken from moral goodness. Job. 1. 1. Zach. Eliz.
6. The Scriptures plainly declare that at the great account between God and our souls, the main inquiry will be concerning our moral good or evil. 25 Mat. 2 Rom. 6. 7.

And God chiefly insists on our moral goodness

1. Because it is by our moral goodness that we do most honor Him.

2. Because that it is by this that we do most imitate Him.
3. Because that it is by this that we advance to our own happiness, for therein it naturally consists.
4. Because when all our positive duty is ceased, this moral goodness is to be our eternal exercise in heaven.

This account of our actions and the moral good or evil of them is a necessary preliminary and introduction to a more particular account of religion and leads us to consider that these our actions might be under the influence of, and flow from some certain principles obliging us to the exercise of them, and to enter into a distinct enumeration of these actions, and these principles.

Religion in general is the obligation of reasonable creatures to render unto God such acts of worship and obedience as are suitable to His nature and their dependence upon Him. And this definition includes the agenda and congnoscenda, the duties and the doctrines of religion, for obedience implies the duties, and the obligations the doctrines which bind us to the observance of those duties.

Religion is natural and revealed. Natural religion is the obligation which natural reason lays us under to render to God all that worship and obedience which upon the consideration of his nature and our dependence upon him, it discovers to be due to him. And revealed religion is the obligation which the revelation which God has made to us lays us under thereunto. But revealed religion is only an improvement of, and addition to natural religion, and both joined together may be thus defined.

Religion is the obligation of rational creatures to render such acts of worship and duty to God by Jesus Christ as he himself hath ordained and as are in their own natures suitable to his excellency and their dependence upon him.

Religion therefore contains those two parts: I. All the duties of our lives which we are obliged to the performance of. These are the agenda. II. All the doctrines that contain in them our obligation to the observance of those duties. These are the cognoscenda or credenda.

I

We are to consider the duties of religion and our obedience due to them. And in discoursing of them we are to consider them as means tending to our own happiness which consists in the knowl-

edge and love of God and likeness to him, the consummation of which is heaven. Now the means conducive to this great end are

A. Immediate, which consist in the practice of all those heavenly virtues in the perfection of which the heavenly life and happiness consists.

B. Mediate, which consist in the practice of those instrumental duties, by which we are to acquire, improve, or perfect those heavenly virtues.

Hence therefore the whole duty of man may be distributed into the religion of the end and of the means.

1. Religion of the end contains all that heavenly virtue wherein the perfection and happiness of human nature consists. Sobriety, piety, and righteousness.
2. Religion of the means consists of all that duty which does naturally or by institution promote that virtue. For the purpose of all religious duties is
   (1) To reconcile men to God and God to them, or
   (2) To perfect the human nature, or
   (3) To entitle men to heaven, or
   (4) To qualify and dispose them for it.

To neither of which purposes the religion of the means is any further serviceable than as it produces and promotes in us the religion of the end.

A. First therefore for the religion of the end and its virtues. Virtue in general consists in a suitable behavior in the states and capacities in which we are placed and therefore since we stand related to ourselves, to God and our neighbors, therefore virtue is threefold, *viz.*, human, divine, and social.

1. Human virtue consists in our behaving ourselves suitably to the state and capacity of mere rational animals, and therefore the virtues under this head are diversified according to the various powers, appetites and passions of soul and body. They may be reduced to these heads.
   (1) Prudence, which consists in being guided by right reason as it proposes the best ends, and the most effectual means for obtaining them. Here considered chiefly with relation to religious ends and means.
   (2) Moderation, which consists in proportioning our concupiscible affections to the just worth and intrinsic value of things. Such are our love, hope, desire, etc.

(3) Fortitude, which consists in not permitting our irascible affections to exceed the nature and measure of the evil we seek to avoid. Such are our hatred, fear, grief, anger, etc.

(4) Temperance, which consists in restraining our bodily appetites so as not to indulge them to the hurt or prejudice of our rational powers. Such are the appetites of of eating, drinking, and venery, and what else relates to the body.

(5) Humility, which consists in a modest and lowly opinion of ourselves, our own acquisitions, merits, or endowments, etc.

2. Divine virtue, which consists in behaving ourselves suitable to the condition of rational animals related to God. And the virtues that are under this head may be reduced to these.

(1) Frequent thinking of God and contemplation of His glorious and enviable perfections.

(2) Ardent love to, and sincere complacency in Him as our only supreme and best good.

(3) Imitation of Him in his imitable perfections and actions, endeavoring to be like Him.

(4) Adoration, or worshipping Him on the account of his adorable perfections.

(5) Fear and reverence for the greatness of His majesty and unlimited power.

(6) Resignation of ourselves to his conduct and disposal in his commanding and providential will.

(7) Dependence upon Him for all we stand in need of, with gratitude for what we receive.

3. Social virtue, which consists in behaving ourselves suitable to the capacity of rational animals related to one another. And the virtues reducible to this head are

(1) Charity in love to all men, in doing good, putting a favorable construction on their words and actions, pitying the distressed, relieving them if possible, liberality to the poor, etc.

(2) Justice and righteousness in all our intercourse one with another, in hurting none, but punctually rendering to everyone his due, with respect to his name and reputa-

tion, estate and endowments, etc., in speaking truth and fidelity in all we undertake, etc.

(3) Peaceable and quiet behavior in our several stations and conditions, not causing or promoting contention and discord among [?].

(4) Modesty and submission towards superiors such as the King and all civil magistrates, our spiritual pastors and guides, parents, masters, etc.

(5) Condescension and tractableness towards those that are our inferiors on what account soever.

These are the chief heads of our duty in the exercise of heavenly virtue and in every one of these it is particularly true that it naturally makes for our happiness and contrariwise for our misery.

The motives to the practice of these virtues are

1. Their suitableness to our state,
2. The dignity of them,
3. The freedom of them,
4. The pleasure of them,
5. The easiness of them,
6. The necessity of them.

Thus much for the religion of the end which contains the immediate means to our happiness.

B. The religion of the means which is the practice of various duties, instrumental in the acquiring, improving and perfecting those virtues. They are initative, progressive, and perfective.

1. Initiative. Such as are chiefly to be practiced in the entrance.
   (1) Faith, a firm and hearty belief of the truth of our religion.
   (2) Due consideration of its motives and balancing of them with its difficulties.
   (3) A deep and thorough conviction of the need of a mediator to render us acceptable in the sight of God, of the excellency of Christ.
   (4) A hearty sorrow, shame and remorse for our sins past.
   (5) Earnest prayer to God for the pardon of them and assistance against them.
   (6) A serious and well-grounded resolution to forsake them. etc.[4]

[4] Here is added (perhaps in another handwriting): "(7) This must be ratified by baptism." [The Editors.]

And these duties must be often repeated all our life long. The motives to them are these:

(1) The vast necessity of beginning a good life some time or other.
(2) The security and advantage of beginning it now.
(3) The dependence of the success of it on well beginning.
(4) Its being once well begun the main difficulty is conquered.

2. The progressive duties are these:

(1) Arming ourselves with courage and patience to undergo difficulties.
(2) Proposing to ourselves the most excellent examples.
(3) Applying ourselves to spiritual guides for direction.
(4) Curiosity concerning our aims and intentions.
(5) Maintaining a lively sense of God's presence and inspection of us.
(6) Frequent examination and review of our actions.
(7) Watchfulness and circumspection in all our conduct.
(8) Following some honest calling with diligence and industry.
(9) Endeavoring after a steady cheerful frame of spirit.
(10) Maintaining a constant persuasion and expectation of heaven.
(11) Living in a constant use of the ordinances of the Gospel. P. W. S., etc.

Motives:

(1) Consider that all the difficulties are owing to ourselves.
(2) That there is much difficulty in sin as well as in war against it.
(3) That however difficult, it must be borne or it is much worse.
(4) That the Grace of God will render every thing possible if we improve it.
(5) That it is fairly consistent with our other occasions.
(6) The difficulty will daily abate if we are constant.
(7) That there is a world of present ease and pleasure tho' it is difficult.
(8) That the difficulty is abundantly compensated in the reward.

3. The perfective duties are these:
   (1) That we keep a jealous eye over our weakness and inconstancy.
   (2) That if we fall we immediately rise by repentance.
   (3) That to prevent our falling we withdraw from all temptation.
   (4) That we search out the defects of our nature and correct them.
   (5) That so far as we can we live in a close communion with the Christ.
   (6) That we entertain ourselves much with the wish of death.
   (7) That we carefully discharge our conscience of past guilt.
   (8) That we stint not our progress to any degree of goodness.
   (9) That we redeem lost time with double diligence for the future.
   (10) Laboring after a well grounded assurance of heaven.

Motives:
   (1) Cons. If we relapse we shall go back faster than we proceeded.
   (2) If we totally relapse we lose all the fruit of the past labor.
   (3) And that after we have gone through the greatest difficulty of it.
   (4) And render our recovery more difficult than ever.
   (5) And plunge ourselves into a more guilty condition than ever.
   (6) And expose ourselves to a more dreadful ruin if we die in apostacy.

II

Thus much for the duties, now follow the great doctrines of religion, which oblige us to the observation of those duties; they may be reduced to these six heads.

A. The acknowledgment and belief of a God. That is, an eternal mind, the maker, preserver, and governor of the world and a being of all possible perfection. And this is the prime fundamental principle of all religion. For God being the great object of all religion it

is absolutely necessary in order to our being truly religious that we believe that God is.

1. The arguments for the proof of the being of God are generally taken from
   (1) The impossibility of the eternity of the world.
   (2) The wonderful contrivances of the works of nature.
   (3) The admirable order in the government of the world.
   (4) The many miraculous events that have happened.
   (5) The universal consent of mankind in this matter.
2. The causes of atheism are
   (1) A perverse opposition of will to the will and nature of God.
   (2) Superstitious misapprehension concerning God.
   (3) Rashness in prescribing to and prejudging of divine providence.
   (4) Vain affection of singularity in opinion.
   (5) Custom of drolling on and ridiculing of serious things.
   (6) Taking up of our religion and opinions without examination.
   (7) Measuring the truth or falsehood of religion by the practice of professors.
   (8) Placing religion in the matters of party we engage in.
   (9) Profane neglect of public worship.
3. The folly of atheism appears in that,
   (1) The atheist concludes against the dignity of human nature.
   (2) He concludes against the being and well-being of human society.
   (3) He concludes against the main comfort and support of our life.
   (4) He concludes for that side of the question which is most unsafe and hazardous.
   (5) He concludes for the unsafest side on the greatest uncertainties.
   (6) He plainly contradicts himself in his conclusion.

B. The next principle of the doctrines of religion requisite for the obliging us to the practice of the duties of it relates to our having right apprehensions of God's nature. For our acts of worship and duty must be such as are suitable to the excellency of it.

1. Now the causes of our misapprehension of God are
   (1) Ignorance of what is the true perfection of our own nature.
   (2) Framing our notions of God according to our own humor and temper.
   (3) Obstinate partiality to our own lusts and passions.
   (4) Measuring God's nature by particular providences.
   (5) Taking up our notions of God from obscure and particular passages of Scripture and not from the plain and general current of it.
   (6) Indevotion and contrariety of our natures to Him.
2. Rules for forming right apprehensions of God are
   (1) If we would think right of God we must ascribe all possible perfection to him.
   (2) In forming our notions of his perfection we must take our rise from the perfections we behold in his creatures (such as these), life, sense, reason.
   (3) In ascribing to Him the perfections of his creatures we must abstract from them every thing that is defective and imperfect.
   (4) In arguing from the perfections of the creature to those of God we must distinguish between the state and relation of creator and creature.
   (5) Tho' in thus arguing we are not to subject God to the rules of the creature, yet we are always to suppose his will and power to be perfectly subject to the perfections of his nature.
   (6) In conceiving of his perfections we are always to suppose them to be exactly harmonious and consistent with each other.
3. And if our ideas and apprehensions are formed aright they will be such as these:
   (1) Self-existence; (2) eternity; (3) infinity; (4) unity; (5) infinitive knowledge; (6) liberty and choice; (7) wisdom; (8) power; (9) goodness; and all other moral perfections.
4. And such just apprehensions of God are needful
   (1) To instruct us what services are most pleasing to Him.
   (2) To inform us with the true principle of religious service, *viz.*, love.

(3) To direct us to the true end of our religious service.
(4) To furnish us with proper motives and encouragements in it.

C. The next principle of the doctrines of religion requisite for the obliging us to the practice of the duties of it is the doctrine of the creation of all things and angels and men, for this is that which founds the relation in which we stand to God and involves us under obligation to Him, and the belief of this gives us a sense of God's right in us, and consequently in the best improvement of all our powers in His service, but since the author mentions not this head I add no more.

D. The next principle of the doctrines of religion requisite for the obliging us to practice the duties of it is the doctrine of providence, for that this our obligation to God may take effect on us, it is necessary that we should believe that He concerns Himself about us, and that He governs the world.

1. Now the whole of God's providence consists
   (1) In God's continual preservation and upholding all things.
   (2) His continual possession of all things as his property.
   (3) His continual inspection of all things.
   (4) His continual ordering and disposal of all things.
   (5) God's continual government of all things and especially of the rational world, and this is either of angels or of men, and with respect to the government of men these things must be believed:
      (a) That the great end of God's government is the good of mankind.
      (b) That in order to this end God hath given us laws for the regulation and government of our actions.
      (c) That to secure our obedience to these laws, he hath derived his authority on lawful sovereigns to govern us by them.
      (d) That he is ready to contribute to us all necessary assistance to enable us to obey these laws.
      (e) That his assistance is such as supposeth us to be free agents and concurs with and maintains our freedom.
      (f) That he takes particular notice of the good or ill use we make of our natural freedom.

(g) That he will certainly reward or punish us accordingly.

2. Now for the proof of a providence we may argue
   (1) *A priori* thus, If there be a God, then
      (a) He must necessarily be and exist of himself without dependence on any superior cause.
      (b) He must necessarily be the cause of all other things.
      (c) He must necessarily be present within all other things.
      (d) Wherever He is, He can't but operate on whatsoever objects He finds to work upon.
   (2) *A posteriori* we may argue from
      (a) The constant direction of things to the same good ends, which have no design in themselves.
      (b) The watchful providence of things which have no foresight in themselves.
      (c) The mutual agreement and correspondence of things which have no understanding of themselves or one another.
      (d) The continuance of things in the same comely order which have no government of themselves.
      (e) Miraculous effects.
      (f) Prediction of future contingencies.
3. The objections against providence are
   Obj. (1) That the exercise of a providence don't comport with the majesty and greatness of God. To which we may answer that it is so far from not comporting with it, that it is the very exercise and evidence of it.
   Obj. (2) That providence is inconsistent with God's quiet and happiness. To which ans.: That God's happiness consists in his eternal activity, and that it can be no disquiet to an omnipotent and omnipresent being.
   Obj. (3) That providence is not consistent with so many natural and moral evils as are in the world.
   Ans. 1. That the permission of moral evils or sin is no more inconsistent with the goodness of God's providence than the making of free agents is inconsistent with the goodness of his nature, for He only permits free agents to act freely, *i. e.*, according to their nature,

Ans. 2. If the evil of sin be consistent with providence much more is the evil of punishment which is natural evil.

Obj. (4) The unequal distribution of good and evil. Ans. Supposing it be so (tho' it happens not always) yet it is no objection against providence, for

(a) We must not suppose men happy or miserable in proportion to the good or evil of their outward circumstances.

(b) Good and evil happen not to us generally as rewards or punishments in this world, but in the necessary course of things.

(c) The good and evil of this world are at best so mean that it would be beneath the wisdom of providence to be very exact about them.

(d) This life is a state of trial and probation (in which it is necessary), and not of reward and punishment.

(e) The good and evil of time are not to be estimated by themselves but by their effects and consequents.

(f) This promiscuous distribution of good and evil is necessary to assure us of a judgment to come, and

(g) An exact adjustment of things is reserved for that day.

Obj. (5) The wretched condition of the heathen world.

Ans. 1. Their condition is not so bad as we are apt to imagine.

Ans. 2. Less degrees of goodness proportionably will be expected and less degrees of punishment will be exacted of them.

Ans. 3. We can't tell but God may have other methods to deal with them than we are aware of.

E. The next principle of the doctrines of religion needful to oblige us to practice the duties of it is the doctrine of the future state.

1. And concerning the future state it is necessary to our being truly religious that we believe

(1) That God will make a very sensible distinction between them that faithfully serve him and others.

(2) That this distinction between them shall be made in a future state after their life.

(3) That the rewards and punishments of this future state do vastly transcend the pleasure we may reap from sin, or the evil we may incur by doing our duty.

(4) That there is no way to avoid these punishments but by forsaking our sins, or to obtain those rewards but by submitting to our duty.

2. Now for the evidences of the future state, they are

(1) The universal consent of mankind.

(2) The wisdom of God's government of the world.

(3) The justice of God's providence.

(4) The natural capacity of our souls to survive our bodies, and enjoy future rewards and suffer future punishments.

(5) The natural expectation of future rewards and dread of future punishments.

(6) The excellent frame and structure of human nature.

(7) The testimony of the Christian religion. But

3. If we would effectually believe the things of the next life

(1) We must fix and inure our minds to serious consideration.

(2) We must endeavor to remove those vicious prejudices which indispose us to the belief of them.

(3) We must duly examine the motives of credibility which are alleged for the evidence of them.

(4) We must add fervent and hearty prayer that our minds may be enlightened and disposed to the belief of them.

And these are properly the principles of natural religion, which yet all of them as to the nature of the things themselves and the evidences of them received abundant illustration from revelation, and by being set in a clear light are capable of having abundantly more effectual influence upon us tho' that great principle which follows strictly speaking is only pure revelation, *viz.*,

F. The last and great principle of the doctrines of religion requisite to oblige us to the practice of the duties of it is the doctrine of Christ's Mediation, for it is in and through Jesus Christ that all our religious services are to be accepted, and concerning this great principle of religion there are three things to be handled, *viz.*,

1. What we are to believe in general of the person and offices of the mediator.
2. The particular parts and offices of his mediation.
3. The evidences that Jesus Christ was truly and only mediator.

1. What we are to believe in general concerning the person and office of the mediator. In order to understand what we are to believe of the person and offices of the mediator, there must be premised some account of the Holy Trinity consisting of three persons in the unity of the Godhead, *viz.*, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Which in general explains what we are to believe of the person and office of Christ in

(1) That the mediator is designed to this office by God who is our absolute lord and sovereign.

(2) That this office to which he is designed and authorized consists in acting for and in the behalf of God and man who are the parties between whom he mediates. The fall of man being the occasion of it, our guilt and polution.

(3) That this his mediation proceeds in certain terms and stipulations between God and man which he obtained of God for us and in his name hath published and tendered to us.

(4) That as he acts for and in the behalf of God and man so he partakes of the natures of both.

(5) That as he partakes of the natures of both so that he might transact personally with both he was sent down from heaven to us and is returned again from us to heaven. On earth he taught us and died for us, in heaven he rules us and intercedes for us.

(6) That upon his return to heaven there to mediate personally for us with God, he substituted the divine and omnipotent Spirit personally to effectuate and promote his mediation for God with man.

(a) This Divine Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.

(b) He is subordinate to Christ who purchased power to send him forth as his vicegerent into the world, and as such there are

i. Some things he hath done and now ceases to do, as

(i) He inspired the holy apostles with the gift of languages.

(ii) He fully and clearly instructed them in the doctrines which they were to preach to the world.

(iii) He enabled them to give convincing evidence of the truth and divinity of those doctrines by miracles.

(iv) He conducted them by his own infallible advice through all the emergent difficulties of their ministry.

ii. There are other things he always continues to do, as

(i) His illumination and informing of minds in truth.

(ii) His sanctification and purifying our wills and affections.

(iii) His quickening and exciting us in the ways of piety and virtue.

(iv) His comforting and supporting us under difficulties and trials.

(v) His intercession and enabling us to offer up ardent prayer to God, and in these consists the work of the Holy Ghost.

2. The particular offices of Christ's mediation are to be considered. Now Christ being a mediator between God and man must treat with and for both parties; accordingly acting for God with man he is God's prophet and king in which he represents God, and acting for man with God, he is our priest in which he represents man. But his offices are generally handled in the same order in which he executed them, where first coming down from heaven he performed the offices of a prophet and then secondly, he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, afterward as a reward for his obedience, God raised him from the dead and received him up to heaven there to intercede for us in the virtue of that sacrifice, and thirdly, to reign over his church, having all power in heaven and earth given him. And in this order He is to be considered as our prophet, priest, and king in the execution of which three offices the whole of his mediation consists. Of these therefore each of them in their order — all to save us from the guilt and power of sin.

(1) This prophetical office of Christ consists in his declaring and explaining the will of God to mankind.

(a) And for the discharge of this office he was perfectly accomplished.

i. He came down immediately from the bosom of the Father.

ii. He came down into our nature which was an advantage in it.

iii. He was always endued with the Holy Ghost.

(b) And accordingly he most faithfully discharged the office.

i. In that he made a full declaration of God's will to the world.

ii. In that he proved and confirmed it by miracles.

iii. In that he gave a perfect example of obedience to it.

iv. In that he sealed the truth of it with his blood.

v. He instituted an order of men to teach and preach it.

vi. He sent his Holy Spirit to recollect and explain to those men this doctrine and to enable them to confirm it by miracles.

(2) The priestly office of old consisted in offering up sacrifices to make an atonement for the people's sins and in interceding for them in the virtue thereof. Now this being typical of our Savior's priesthood that must also consist in those two offices, for which also being God and man he was most perfectly qualified.

(a) The first act of his priestly office consisted in his offering himself a sacrifice for our sins.

i. And this death of Christ had in it all the requisite conditions of a real and complete sacrifice for sin, for,

(i) He was substituted in the room of sinful men to be punished for them in order to their being released from their personal obligation to punishment.

(ii) He died in pure and spotless innocence as was highly necessary in order to his being an expiatory sacrifice.

(iii) His death was of intrinsic worth to bring on equivalent commutation for the punishment due to the whole world of sinners, by reason of the dignity of his person.

(iv) His death was on his part voluntary and unforced, and this is that which makes it consistent

with justice for God to inflict on him the punishment due to us.

(v) His death was admitted and accepted by God in lieu of the punishment due to him from mankind, and 'tis this that completes it an expiatory sacrifice, and these all put together are the qualifications of sacrifice.

ii. Now this appears to be a wise and effectual method of God's admitting of a sacrifice for sinners, for the reformation of mankind, in that

(i) The sacrifice of Christ's death was a most sensible and affecting acknowledgment of the vast guilt and demerit of sin.

(ii) It was a most ample declaration of God's severity against sin.

(iii) It was a most obliging expression of the love of God and our Savior.

(iv) It was a sure ground for hope of pardon if we repent.

(v) It was a seal and confirmation of the New Covenant.

(b) The second act of Christ's priestly office was his presenting this sacrifice to God in heaven by way of intercession or advocation for us.

i. As for the nature of this intercession, it consists in that

(i) It is a solemn address of our blessed Savior to God the Father in our behalf.

(ii) This address is performed by presenting his sacrificed body to the Father in our behalf.

(iii) It is continued and perpetuated by a continued oblation of this his sacrificed body.

(iv) In virtue of this perpetual oblation he doth always successfully move and solicit God.

a. To receive and graciously accept our sincere and hearty prayer.

b. To impower him to bestow upon us all those graces and favors which in consideration of his sacrifice God hath promised to us.

ii. And this method of God's communicating his favors

to us through the intercession of our Savior is of admirable tendency to reform mankind, for

(i) It naturally tends to excite in us a mighty awe and reverence of God's majesty treating us at a distance.

(ii) It tends to give us a strong conviction of God's hatred and abhorrence of our sins, in not suffering any address but by proxy.

(iii) It tends to secure us from presuming upon God's mercy while we continue in sin. For there is no mercy but by Christ.

(iv) It tends to encourage us to draw near to God with cheerfulness and freedom by such an intercessor.

(v) It tends to give us the most ample assurance of God's gracious intentions to us if we repent of our sins.

(3) The kingly office of Christ consists in his ruling and defending his church. And of this large subject there are many things to be considered, as

(a) We shall consider the rise and progress of Christ's kingdom, and this is handled in the following propositions:

i. That Christ's kingdom is forwarded in the New Covenant which commenced immediately after the fall of man and was afterward renewed with Abraham, etc. Now at the first commencement and ever after he was the mediator of it, and therefore,

ii. As mediator of the New Covenant Christ is as the king of all that were ever admitted into it and particularly of the people of Israel.

iii. That after his coming into the world he was still king of Israel in particular till they rejected him and the Covenant in which his kingdom was founded.

iv. That tho' the main body of that nation rejected him, yet there was a remnant who owned him as their rightful lord and king.

v. That this remnant still continued the same individual kingdom, tho' much reformed and improved.

vi. That to this individual Kingdom of Christ was super-

added all those Gentiles that were afterward converted to Christianity.

(b) In the next place the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom is to be considered, which although taken in its largest sense contains the whole world, but his Church is in a more particular manner his kingdom, being professedly so. Now the Church of Christ is

i. That one universal society of all Christian people.
ii. This society is incorporated by the New Covenant.
iii. The members of it are incorporated in baptism.
iv. They are incorporated under Jesus Christ the supreme head.
v. This society is distributed into particular churches.
vi. It is distributed under lawful governors and pastors.
vii. These particular churches as members of the catholic church are supposed to hold communion one with another.
(i) In all the essentials of Christian faith.
(ii) In all the essentials of Christian worship.
(iii) In all the essentials of Christian discipline.

(c) Next the ministers of Christ's kingdom are to be considered and they are of four sorts:

i. The supreme minister by which Christ rules his Church is the Holy Ghost, of whose ministry above.
ii. The next under him are the angels.
(i) The good angels are subject to Christ by the ordination and appointment of God and their ministry consists
a. In declaring upon occasion his mind and will to his Church.
b. In guarding and defending his subjects from outward dangers.
c. In supporting and comforting them in great undertakings and calamities.
d. In protecting them from the rage and fury of evil spirits.
e. In furthering and assisting them in religious offices.

f. In conducting their separate spirits to mansions of glory.

(ii) The evil angels are subjected to Christ by conquest and their ministry consists

a. In trying and exercising the virtues of his subjects.

b. In chastening and correcting their faults and miscarriages.

c. In searing and hardening his incorrigible rebels.

d. In exercising his vengeance on them in another world.

iii. The third sort of ministers of Christ's kingdom are the kings and governors of the world.

(i) As to these by their subjection to Christ they are not deprived of the natural right of their sovereignty.

a. They are not deprived of their natural right of commanding in all cases as they shall judge most convenient for the public good where God has not countermanded.

b. Nor secondly, of their natural rights of being unaccountable to any but to God through Jesus Christ.

(ii) They are obliged to render several ministries to our Savior by virtue of their subjection to him, as

a. To protect and defend his Church in the profession and exercise of the true religion.

b. To promote its peace and good order by wholesome laws of their own, or by permitting it to make laws for itself, and if need be enforcing them with civil coercions.

c. To chasten and correct the irregular members of it especially if factious and seditious.

d. To make provision for the decency of its worship and for the convenient maintenance of its ministers and thus kings are nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers.

iv. The fourth sort of ministers in Christ's kingdom are the spiritual or ecclesiastical governors and ministers.

(i) Christ hath erected a spiritual government to minister to him in his kingdom, for
   a. Government is necessary to a sound and regular society.
   b. The church in the nature and constitution of it is a well formed and regular society, and therefore must have a distinct government included in the very essence and being of it.

(ii) Christ hath placed his government in the hands of the bishops, and that the episcopal form of church government is of divine right appears
   a. From the institution of our Savior, the "Twelve" and "Seventy."
   b. From the practice of the holy apostles, who ordained successors as James at Jeshsabin, Epaphroditus at Philippi, Timothy at Ephesus, Titus at Crete, etc.
   c. From our Savior's declared allowance and approbation as appears from the Epistles to the Angels of the churches, who were single persons of great authority in them and can be nothing else but presidents or bishops and were so called by primitive writers.

(iii) The ministry of the bishops of the church is various.
   a. Some parts of it are in common with the inferior clergy, which are subordinate, as priests and deacons, especially priests.
      1. As first, to preach the Gospel.
      2. To administer the holy sacraments.
      3. To offer up the public prayers of the churches.
   b. Some parts are peculiar to the episcopal order.
      1. To make laws for the peace and good order of the Church.
      2. To ordain to ecclesiastical offices.
      3. To execute spiritual jurisdiction.
      4. To confirm such as have been instructed.

(d) In the next place the regal acts of Christ are to be considered, and they are

i. Such as he hath performed once for all as,

(i) His giving laws to his kingdom such as the law of perfection and of sincerity.

(ii) His mission of the Holy Spirit to subdue men's minds to the obedience of them.

(iii) His erecting an external polity or form of government in his kingdom.

ii. Such acts of royalty as he always performs and continues to perform, as these,

(i) His pardoning penitent sinners, but since this is attributed to the Father as well as the Son, we must consider first what the Father doth, as

a. One thing peculiar to God the Father is his making a general grant of pardon to sinners.

b. His making it in consideration of Christ's sacrifice.

c. And that with the restrictions and limitations of our faith, repentance, and new obedience. Now therefore what our Lord does as peculiar to him as our king is his making a particular application of this general grant to particular penitent sinners.

(ii) His punishing obstinate and unreclaimable sinners.

(iii) His protecting and defending his kingdom.

(iv) Rewarding his faithful subjects in the life to come.

iii. Such acts of royalty as he is yet to perform, as,

(i) He is yet further to extend and enlarge his kingdom by the accession of Jews and Gentiles thereunto when there will be an universal peace and order.

(ii) He is yet to destroy death by causing a general resurrection of the dead.

a. That there will be a resurrection of the dead is evident from Scripture, the objections against it are solved from God's omnisciency and omnipotency.

b. As to the manner of it, expressed in these particulars:
   1. That the mortal body shall be the principle of the resurrection.
   2. That it must die and corrupt before it be revived.
   3. That it must be quickened and raised by the mighty power of God.
   4. That it shall be raised into the proper form of a human body.
   5. That it shall be changed and altered at the resurrection and as for the bodies of good men, they shall be changed
      (1) From base and humble into glorious bodies.
      (2) From earthly and fleshly into heavenly and spiritual bodies.
      (3) From weak and passive into strong and active bodies.
      (4) From mortal and corruptible into immortal and incorruptible. But the bodies of the wicked will have nothing glorious in their change tho' rendered incorruptible.

(iii) He is yet to judge the world.
   a. That there shall be a general judgment is also evident from Scriptures and reason and that our Savior shall judge.
   b. There will be several signs and wonders in heaven and earth that will forebode this judgment.
   c. As to the manner and circumstances of his judgment,
      1. Our Savior, the judge, shall come from the highest heavens.
      2. He shall come in a glorious state in the glory of his Father and the angels.
      3. He shall come appearing in the clouds of heaven.

4. He shall come attended with all his saints and angels.
5. His judgment seat shall be fixed in the air.

d. As to the whole process of his judgment it relates
1. To the righteous and with respect to them (1) their summons, (2) their appearance, (3) their trial, (4) their sentence, (5) their assumption into the clouds.
2. To the wicked and with respect to them (1) their summons, (2) their appearance, (3) their trial, (4) their sentence, (5) their execution.

After which our Savior will return with triumph and all his host of saints and angels into heaven.

(e) Our Savior having thus finished all parts of his mediatorial offices shall deliver up his kingdom to the Father, with respect to which observe
i. That this kingdom was committed to him by the Father.
ii. He is to possess this kingdom till all things are subdued unto him and no longer.
iii. After his delivery of the kingdom to the Father he will be otherwise subject to him than now, *i. e.*, personally.
iv. Being thus subjected to the Father, all power shall thenceforward be immediately exercised by the Deity.

(f) And finally this method of God's ruling us by Christ is of excellent tendency to reform mankind.
i. In that it is more accommodated to the degenerate state.
ii. It tends more effectually to cure and prevent idolatry.
iii. It tends more powerfully to encourage our obedience.
iv. It tends to oblige us with a stronger tie of gratitude and ingenuity.
v. It tends to give us a more ample assurance of our reward.

3. The last thing is to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was this mediator. Now there are three ways whereby the Father testified that this Jesus was the Messiah.

(1) By sundry ancient predictions of him which were all exactly accomplished in him.

(2) By sundry voices from heaven where by He proclaimed him his well-beloved Son.

(3) By miracles which by the power of God he wrought in his own person, as raising the dead, and curing all manner of diseases, etc., but of all the miracles which Jesus wrought there were none which he more staked the credit of his doctrine on than that of his resurrection from the dead. Now the evidence of this must be gained from the testimony of the holy apostles and their testimony will be accounted valid upon these conditions:

(a) They certainly knew whether it were so or not.
(b) There was a sufficient number to make it credible.
(c) They were men of known honesty and integrity.
(d) There was no apparent motive to induce them to deceive or impose on the world, but much to the contrary.
(e) They gave a great security for the truth of their testimony for they sealed it with their blood.
(f) They gave sufficient signs and tokens of the truth of their testimony in their working miracles.

All which circumstances concurring they can't be suspected, and this method of our Savior's proving his doctrine by miracles is the best and most effectual method in that

(a) It is the most proper and convenient.
(b) The most certain and infallible.
(c) The most plain and popular.
(d) The shortest and most compendious evidence that could be given, and therefore worthy of all acceptation.

And therefore all honor and glory be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

FINIS

THE HEADS OF DR. S. CLARK'S BOYLEAN LECTURES

I. A demonstration of the being and attributes of God.
   1. Prop. That something hath existed from eternity.
   2. There has existed from eternity some one immutable and independent being.

3. That immutable independent being that has existed from all eternity without any external cause of its existence, must be self-existent, that is, it must be necessarily existing.
4. What the substance or essence of that self-existent being is, we have no idea, nor is it possible for us to comprehend it.
5. Yet many of the essential attributes of his nature are plainly demonstrable, as in the first place He must of necessity be eternal.
6. That this self-existent being must also of necessity be infinite and omnipresent.
7. That this self-existent being must also of necessity be but one.
8. That this self-existent and original cause of all things must necessarily be an intelligent being.
9. That the self-existent and original cause of all things is not a necessary agent, but a being indued with perfect liberty and power.
10. That the self-existent being, the supreme cause of all things must necessarily have infinite power.
11. That the supreme cause and author of all things must of necessity be infinitely wise.
12. That the supreme cause of all things must of necessity be a being of infinite goodness, justice, and truth, and all other moral perfections, such as become the supreme governor and judge of the world.

II. Of the obligations of natural and evidences of revealed religion.

1. Prop. That from the eternal and necessary differences of things there naturally and necessarily rise certain moral obligations which are of themselves incumbent on all rational creatures, antecedent to all positive institutions and to all expectation of rewards and punishments.
2. That these eternal moral obligations which arise necessarily from the natural differences of things are moreover the express will, command, and law of God to all rational creatures.
3. These eternal moral obligations which are themselves incumbent on all rational creatures, antecedent to any respect to reward and punishment, must yet certainly and necessarily be attended with reward and punishment.

4. That because these rewards and punishments are not distributed in the present state, therefore there must necessarily be a future state.
5. That tho' the necessity and indispensableness of all the great and moral obligations of natural religion, and all the certainty of a future state of reward and punishment be in general deducible from right reason; yet such is this present corrupt estate and condition of mankind that very few are able in reality and effect to discover these things clearly for themselves, but men have great need of particular teaching and instruction.
6. That all the teaching and instruction of the best heathen philosophers was for many reasons insufficient to reform mankind.
7. That there was plainly wanting a divine revelation to recover mankind out of their universally degenerate state and that both the necessities of men and their natural notions of God gave them reasonable ground to hope for such a revelation.
8. That there is no other religion now in the world but the Christian that has any just pretense or tolerable appearance of reason to be esteemed such a divine revelation.
9. That the Christian religion has all the marks and proofs of its being a divine revelation, that any divine revelation supposed it was true, could reasonably be imagined or desired to have as these:
10. The practical duties which Christian revelation or religion enjoins are all such as are most agreeable to our natural notions of God and most perfective of the nature and conducive to the happiness and well-being of men, which is a great evidence of its coming from God.
11. That the motives by which the Christian religion enforces the practice of these duties are such as are most suitable to the excellent wisdom of God and most answerable to the natural expectations of men: such as the divine assistance, the acceptableness of repentance, and future rewards and punishments.
12. The peculiar manner and circumstances with which the Christian religion enjoins the duties and urges the motives

before mentioned are exactly consonant to the dictates of sound reason or the unprejudiced light of nature, and most wisely perfective of it as examples, etc.

13. That all the credenda or doctrines which the Christian requires our particular assent to are (when rightly explained) agreeable to unprejudiced reason, have every one of them a direct tendency to reform men's manners, and do together make up the most consistent and rational scheme of belief in the world.
14. That the Christian religion is positively and directly proved to be sent to us from God by the fulfilling of prophecies, by the miracles which our Savior wrought, and by the testimony of the apostles. And therefore
15. That they who will not by the arguments and proofs alleged be convinced of the truth and certainty of the Christian religion, they will be convinced not by any evidence whatsoever, no not tho' we should rise from the dead to endeavor to convince them.

FINIS

Books Proper for a Young Man to Read in the Course of His Studies

1. Dr. Fiddes, Body of Divinity.
2. Dr. Scott's Christian Life.
3. Bp. Pearson on the Creed, and Barrow.
4. Kittlewell's Practical Believer.
5. —— His Measures of Christian Obedience.
6. Bingham's Antiquities.
7. Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoritus.
8. Ld. King's Inquiry, and
9. The Original Draught of the Primitive Church.
10. Dr. Potter Of Church Government.
11. Cover Primitive Christianity and Apostolici.
12. Nelson's Feasts and Fasts.
13. Abp. Sharp's Sermons.
14. Sherlock On Death and Judgment.
15. Thomas a Kempis. Etc. Etc. Etc.
16. Abp. Wake's Apostolical Fathers.

17. Reeves Apologies of Justin Martyr, Etc.
18. Chrysostom De Sacerdotis.
19. Bp. Burnet's Pastoral Care.
20. Dr. Bennet's Abridgment of the London Cases.

A Short Form of Morning or Evening Prayer for a Single Person

1. O Thou Almighty Being, on whom depends the existence of the world and every creature therein, and by whom all things are governed and conducted to the several ends of their being, according to the various natures which Thou hast given them; it is by Thy good providence that I have been brought into being, and most tenderly preserved and provided for, from the beginning of my life to this moment, and enjoyed many undeserved advantages and favors, with regard both to my well-being in this life, and my everlasting happiness in the life to come.

2. I do particularly, most gratefully acknowledge the inestimable advantages of thy Holy Gospel, made known to us in thy name by thy blessed Son Jesus Christ, and all that he hath taught and done and suffered for us; and I beseech Thee graciously to accept of my most grateful sense and acknowledgment of all thy bounty and beneficence towards me; and especially the preservation of the night (or day) past, and all they goodness towards both me and mine.* — Bless Jehovah O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. — Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. — Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thine infirmities; — Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. — Bless Jehovah, O my soul! —

3. And, whereas, notwithstanding the mighty obligations of thy goodness, I have in many instances ungratefully and perversely sinned against they most righteous and reasonable laws in neglecting to do what thou hast commanded and doing what thou hast forbidden: — I humbly profess before thee, my utter abhorrence of all my perverseness, and my serious resolution, by thy grace, to be more watchful against all temptations, and to amend my conduct for the time to come. O let my whole soul be devoted to Thee my God in Jesus Christ without reserve! And I do most earnestly

* Note: where there is such a little line —, we should do well to consider and think of particulars.

beg the forgiveness of my great and many offenses, through the merits and intercession of thy dear son Jesus Christ, and grant me to obtain favor and acceptance with Thee, through thy free grace in him, in whom thou art ever well pleased, and for his sake deliver both me and others from the evil consequences of all my transgressions and follies.

4. And I humbly beseech thee, O my God, to vouchsafe me the gracious presence and assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to renew my soul, and to endue me with such dispositions and powers as may carry me innocently and safely through all future trials; and enable me upon all occasions from a sense of duty to thee my God, to behave myself conformable to thy most holy laws, (which are all founded in the most perfect reason) in all prudence, probity and virtue, and in the faithful discharge of all the duties of temperance, piety and benevolence, in a humble dependence on thy infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, and thy redeeming love in Jesus Christ; and under a lively and habitual sense of thy all-seeing eye, and the great account to be given of myself to Thee.

5. — I humbly beg leave, most gracious God, to command both myself and all that are dear to me, to thy most gracious protection, conduct and blessing, this day (or night) and at all times; suffer none of thy creatures to injure any of us, no misfortune to befall us, nor us to hurt ourselves or others, by any error or misconduct of our own; and vouchsafe us clear and distinct apprehensions and a right judgment in all things; together with all virtuous tempers and dispositions, and so much health and prosperity as may be truly good for us, in this our present state of probation.

6. Grant, I beseech thee, that we may, at least, pass our time in peace with contentment and tranquillity of mind; and that we may faithfully discharge our duties to Thee our God, and to our families and friends; to our country and to all mankind; and endeavor to improve ourselves in all virtuous habits and useful knowledge; and to do all the good we can throughout the whole course of our continuance in this world; (and, O may we live to do much good for the glory of thy name and the good of mankind!) that we may at last calmly and decently take our departure from this present stage, and then find ourselves happy together in a better state; even a state of unmixed and endless happiness in the life to come.

7. All which, and whatsoever else thou seest needful for soul and body both for me and my friends and all thy people; for all orders

and conditions of men both in church and state, and especially the children of affliction and distress; I humbly beg through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son Jesus Christ, comprehending them with myself in that holy form of prayer which he hath taught us: Our Father which art in Heaven, etc.

A Prayer (besides shorter morning and evening prayers) proper to be used any time when one can find leisure to retire, especially before the sacrament. At this line — think of particulars.

I. Confession

O most holy blessed and glorious Jehovah, the eternal Father, Son and Holy Ghost, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner. Lord hear my prayer and let me cry come unto thee.

O most holy God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and abhorest all the works of wickedness, being by the essential purity of thy nature removed at an infinite distance from all imperfection; I thy sinful creature humbly prostrate myself before Thee, acknowledging that I am not worthy to look up unto Thee, or to call upon Thee as my Father; for I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am utterly unworthy to be called thy son: (or child) I am poluted in my nature with a perverse backwardness to good and proneness to evil: and my guilt is grievously inhanced by innumerable evil practices from my youth up. — For tho' by my baptism and holy profession, I am under the solemnest obligations to the contrary; yet I must acknowledge that in many, very many instances, I have grievously sinned in thought, — word, — and deed, — against Thee my God, — my neighbor, — and my self, — neglecting to do what Thou hast commanded. — and doing what Thou hast forbidden: — Yea, Lord, I must confess, I have sinned through willfulness, and perverseness, against my better knowledge, — as well as through ignorance and frailty, — and that against all the obligations of thy infinite goodness, as well as thy tremendous authority. Alas, O Lord, how many, how great, and how grievously aggravated have mine offenses been! To me belongs shame and confusion of face, I confess, but unto Thee O Lord my God belong mercy and forgiveness, tho' I have rebelled against Thee. Have mercy upon me, O my God, I most humbly beseech

Thee; have mercy upon me a miserable sinner, according to the multitude of thy mercies, and I earnestly beg, by the blood of the immaculate Lamb, in whom thou art ever well pleased, that thou wilt not be severe to mark what is done amiss. — Behold me yet, I entreat Thee, as thine own offspring, and as the purchase of the blood of thy dear Son, and let me not perish, for thy infinite mercy's sake in Jesus Christ. Amen.

II. Petitions

And that my soul may live and not die, I implore the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to touch my heart with a deep and bitter sense of all my sins; that, from an unfeigned godly sorrow and truly contrite heart, the whole frame and bias of my soul may be effectually burned from the love of sin, to a perfect hatred of it, and an unfeigned love of Thee my God and my duty, without reserve. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew in me a right spirit. O cleanse thou me from my secret faults, and keep me back from presumptuous sins. Let them not prevail against me, let them not have dominion over me. — O cleanse me from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and enable me to perfect holiness in thy fear, by yielding a sincere, constant and universal obedience to thy holy laws for the time to come; and let my heart be faithfully devoted to Thee, my God, in Jesus Christ. And do Thou, O Father of mercies, forgive me my great and many offenses, through the merits and intercession of thy dear Son. Let his precious blood be my atonement, and in his all perfect and meritorious righteousness, let me find mercy and acceptance with Thee. And for his sake, I beseech Thee to grant me the renewing influences of thy Holy Spirit to enable me to mortify all my corrupt affections, and to love Thee, the Lord my God, with all my heart, and with all my soul; with all my mind and with all my might, and to love my neighbors as myself; that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Savior in all things, by all sobriety, purity, humility, and meekness in the government of my lusts and passions; by piety and devotion towards Thee, my God, and justice and charity towards men; daily adding to my faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; to knowledge temperance; to temperance patience; to patience godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness and charity: that the delight of my soul may be in whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, and whatsoever things are lovely and of good report; and grant that all these heavenly virtues and graces may at length in some measure make me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, through thy free grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. — And finally, to sum up all my requests: I do earnestly beseech Thee, O my God, to renew my soul by the mighty power of thy grace, and to pardon all my sins through the merits and intercession of thy dear Son; to prevent any ill effects of my sin and folly upon myself or others, and to sanctify me wholly that my whole spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless to thy heavenly kingdom, through thy infinite mercy in Jesus Christ. Amen.

III. Intercession

I do moreover most humbly implore thy tender compassion, most merciful God, to this whole miserable race of mankind. O let thy ways be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations; and build up thy universal church in truth and peace and holiness; and let all that name the name of Christ depart from all iniquity. — Let the truth as it is in Jesus powerfully and gloriously shine forth to the utter dissipation of all infidelity, superstition, heresy, and schism, and to the advancement of all holiness and righteousness among men, — let all kings and princes, and especially our sovereign, be nursing fathers to thy church, and employ none but wise and faithful men in their service who will industriously seek the real public weal of thy people and the honor and interest of thy true religion, separate from every base, selfish, party and unworthy consideration. — O purify the tribe of Levi, and let the bishops and clergy be faithful stewards of thy mysteries, and abundant success attend the means of grace. — Plead the cause of thy Gospel, thy Church, our nation and this land, against all the enemies thereof. — Look in thy tender compassion upon all the children of affliction: Heal the sick — ; and give those that are dying true repentance, a lively faith and a happy exit: — comfort the bereaved: — provide for the widows and fatherless: — plead the cause of the oppressed: — relieve the wants of the poor and needy: — redeem prisoners and captives: — compose the distracted: — enlighten those that are in darkness: — succor those that are tempted and recover those that are fallen into sin, and be

merciful to all that need thy help and pity: according to the multitude of thy mercies. — Let all that are near and dear to me ever be under the almighty protection of thy good providence, and the gracious conduct of thy Blessed Spirit, — and let us all learn to be so conformed and united to Thee, both in heart and life, while we continue here, that we may at length be eternally happy together with Thee in Thy Kingdom of glory in the life to come. — All which I most earnestly beg of thee, O gracious God, in their behalf, through the merits and intercession of thy blessed Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

IV. Thanksgiving

I humbly thank Thee, O my good God, for all the blessings of thy providence, both temporal and spiritual; for my creation, preservation and redemption; for all the comforts and blessings of this life, and the hopes of a better, with all the blessed means in order to it. — I adore the wonders of thy love in every step thy blessed Son Jesus Christ has taken in accomplishing our redemption; in his holy incarnation and heavenly instructions, his exemplary life and meritorious death, in glorious resurrection, and triumphant exaltation and powerful intercession at thy right hand, with all the blessed fruits thereof; I bless thee for thy Holy Spirit with all his heavenly gifts and graces; for thy precious word and sacraments, and all the advantages thou hast placed me under to make me wise and good and happy both here and forever; that thou hast called me to repentance after all my provocations with the offer of a most gracious pardon, and hast kept me back from the worst of evils, and assisted me to the least good, and lengthened out thy patience and forbearance towards me to long suffering, and saved me from many dangers in the course of my life and from being ruined by my own sin and folly. It is of thy infinite mercy that I am not consumed, and because thy compassions fail not; they have been renewed to me every morning and thy faithfulness every night. All praise and glory be to Thee, my God. — O let all thy goodness effectually engage me to love and serve thee with all my heart. And grant I beseech thee that the older I grow the more I may be disengaged from the fading things of time and sense and daily improve in every grace and virtue. Let my soul be more and more raised to such a holy and heavenly temper; to such a delight

in thee, my God, such unspotted purity and unfeigned and fervent charity, as may, in some good measure qualify me for the company of saints and angels in thy heavenly kingdom. — And finally, grant I beseech Thee, both to me and mine, that while we live we may live to the Lord, that when we come to die we may die in the Lord; that henceforth whether living or dying, we may be thine, forever, through Jesus Christ, the Son of thy Love, our only Savior and mighty Redeemer; in whose holy name and words I humbly offer up all my requests. Our Father etc.

A Few Reflections and Aspirations before One Falls Asleep

All nature clearly shows in all its works that there is an infinitely powerful wise and good God, who made and governs the world, and such a being must delight in true piety and virtue; and what he delights in must be happy! But in this present mixed, corrupt and imperfect state, this cannot be. I am therefore sure there will be another state after this, wherein all things shall finally be adjusted; and piety and virtue shall be happy.

I can continue here but a little while; I must soon put off this earthly tabernacle; but it is only this decaying body that can fade and die; when my soul, which only is properly myself, shall continue to live, to think and act and flourish in immortal youth: and O that it may be duly qualified by the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus to dwell forever in unfading bliss, with the great Father of Spirits (who are his whole family in heaven and earth) with whom may it forever drink of the river of his pleasures!

O Thou Eternal Being, the ancient of days, Thou hast always existed before all ages, and thy years shall never have an end. O Thou Almighty Being, the great Genius of the world, by whom all things exist, and without whom nothing could ever have been at all; it is on the free exertion of thy omniscient power and will that all things depend, and thou art the great source of all being, perfection and happiness.

Thou like the sun to this world of bodies, art a glorious sun to the world of spirits; the light and life of every created intelligence; the light that can never be extinguished, the life that can never die.

Thee, O my God, will I ever devoutly acknowledge and love,

revere and adore; to thee will I humbly resign; in thee, I can most safely confide; who art always and everywhere present, whose goodness is boundless, whose wisdom is infinite and whose power is uncontrollable.

Let my whole soul be entirely devoted to thee, and freely conformed to thy purity, rectitude, truth and goodness; that I may never cease to be happy both in thee, my God, and in myself and others, rejoicing together with them in the ever flowing streams of thy almighty benevolence.

Which may God the Father of his infinite mercy grant, through the merits and mediation of his blessed Son Jesus Christ, and by the renewing influence of his Holy Spirit; to which one eternal Jehovah in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be ascribed as is most due all honor and glory, dominion and power, world without end. Amen.

These Two Collects to Be Used Instead of the First Collect for Morning Prayer [May, 1756]

O Almighty God, who rulest over all the kingdoms of the earth and on whose most gracious providence they depend evermore for preservation and prosperity; extend thine accustomed goodness to the people of this land, who looking up to thee, as the supreme author of all blessings, and their sure safe-guard and mighty deliverer in all dangers and difficulties, do now implore thy watchful care and protection beseeching thee to guide them continually with thy counsel, to strengthen them with thy powerful arm, and to crown their necessary endeavors against the unjust attempts of their enemies, with perpetual success, thro' our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Lord God of Our Salvation, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, of good and evil, and without whose aid the wisest counsels of frail men, and the multitude of an host, and all the instruments of war are but weak and vain; incline thine ear we pray thee to the earnest and devout supplications of thy servants, who not confiding in the splendor of anything that is great, or the stability of anything that is strong, here below, do most humbly flee, O Lord, unto thee for succor, and put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Be thou unto us a strong tower of defence

against the assaults of our enemies, our shield and buckler in the day of battle, and so bless the arms of our Gracious Sovereign, in the maintenance of his just and lawful rights, and the advancement of the welfare of his Kingdom, that we being preserved by thy help and goodness, from all perils and disasters, and made happily triumphant over all the disturbers of our peace, may joyfully laud and magnify thy glorious name; and serve thee from generation to generation in all godliness and quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord most good and powerful, we thy sinful people here assembled before thee do acknowledge thine unspeakable mercy, that for our manifold heinous provocations we are not utterly consumed, and given over for a prey to the enemy and avenger. We confess with sorrow and confusion, our long unfruitfulness under the means of grace, the light of thy Gospel, and the many wonderful deliverances of this church and state, which thou in thy great goodness hast vouchsafed unto us. O Lord, shouldest thou enter into judgment with us for the crying sins of this nation, our profaneness and infidelity, heresies and schisms, our gross impurities, and other manifold offenses, thou mightest justly inflict upon us the severity of thy wrath, and deliver us up to the reproaches and insults of our enemies; but there is mercy with thee therefore shalt thou be feared; Thou art the Lord God, tender and full of compassion, not willing that any should perish, but that all should repent and live. Look down therefore we beseech thee with an eye of pity, and loving-kindness, upon thy servants, who with broken and contrite hearts, do here bewail our transgressions and wretchedness. Let our land in this time of trouble still enjoy the light of thy countenance and the blessings of thy bountiful hand; and so work upon our hearts and minds by the gracious influences of thy Holy Spirit, that being turned from the error of our ways and created to newness of life, we may walk before thee in all righteousness and holiness in this world, and inherit thine everlasting kingdom in that which is to come, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

A Prayer to Be Used Daily During the War

O most merciful God, the supreme disposer of all events, and the refuge of all those who trust in thee, we thy unworthy servants,

do most humbly implore thy gracious aid, and protection. Be thou to us, O Lord, in this time of danger and trouble, a sure guardian and rock of defence, go forth we beseech thee with our fleets and armies, let thy almighty hand ever be over them, and the light of thy countenance shine upon them. Vouchsafe also thy especial blessing to our most Gracious Sovereign, King George; defend him from all secret conspiracies, and open violence; direct his counsels, and prosper all his endeavors, for the welfare of these nations. And O Lord let neither our unhappy divisions, nor our other manifold sins and provocations, obstruct his designs for the public good, nor bring down thy judgments upon us; but spare thy people, O Lord, spare us; and by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, so unite us in a firm and uniform course of obedience to thy will, and an hearty zeal for thy honor and service, that we may evermore rejoice in thy salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for This Church and Kingdom

Blessed Lord, who at sundry times, and in divers manners hast manifested thine abundant favor to these realms in thy marvellous protection of our religion, laws and liberties, from the secret conspiracies and open attempts of malicious enemies, we adoring thy glorious majesty with all praises and thanksgivings for the same, beseech thee to preserve evermore in our minds, such a lively memory, and grateful sense of these thine invaluable mercies, that by our exemplary and religious use of them, and happy improvements under them, to thy honor and service, we may be accounted worthy of the continuance of thy blessings to us, and our posterity. Take away from us, O Lord, all hardness of heart, all neglect of thine ordinances, and contempt of thy word; and endue us with a spirit of piety and devotion, a spirit of justice and temperance, of humility and charity, and all other graces which adorn the Christian profession; that so thy dreadful displeasure and judgments may be ever averted from us, and iniquity not become our ruin. Grant this O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, to whom with thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

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